The Complete PROSE of T. S. Eliot

The Critical Edition

VOLUME 5

Tradition and Orthodoxy,

1934–1939

edited by

IMAN JAVADI,

RONALD SCHUCHARD

& JAYME STAYER

VISIT…

The COMPLETE PROSE *of*
T. S. Eliot

RONALD SCHUCHARD, *General Editor*

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T. S. Eliot

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VOLUME 5 : *Tradition and Orthodoxy, 1934–1939*

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TRADITION AND ORTHODOXY, 1934-1939
Introduction

I

This volume presciently opens with a *Criterion* "Commentary" of January 1934. T. S. Eliot has taken up two unrelated phenomena that will later converge: the power of a historian's rhetoric and the impotence of liberal Christianity. In the first section of the commentary, Eliot brings a light touch to the problem of historical writing. Although he admires the skill of Winston Churchill's biography of the Duke of Marlborough, Eliot frowns on the oratorical style – "constantly pitching the tone a little too high" – in which the writer, too accustomed to public speaking, seems to pause at the end of his periods "for the invariable burst of hand-clapping" (5.3-4). Finishing off Churchill by comparing his style to the patriotic bluster of G. M. Trevelyan, Eliot turns in the second part of his commentary to more serious matters, inspecting various Christian arguments against communism. He takes a dim view of H. G. Wood's liberal Christianity, which is not coherent enough to oppose the strong orthodoxies of communism: Wood's principles "are all very well," Eliot complains, "but they suffer from the fact that everyone can accept them: there is nothing specifically Christian about them" (5.7).

Both themes will reappear in this volume. Eliot's suspicion of nationalist rhetoric – whether from communist, fascist, or democratic quarters – would harden into a point of principle in the ensuing years. Likewise, his calls for a pure, dogmatic Christianity with which to oppose communism and fascism would increase in urgency. Aside from their thematic repetition, what brings these unrelated strands together retrospectively is that, when war finally broke out, it would be neither the bromides of liberal Christianity nor the orthodoxy of Eliot's Anglo-Catholicism that would save Britain from hostile powers. It would be Winston Churchill, no longer speaking as historian but as wartime Prime Minister, whose resonant oratory would uphold a beleaguered nation.

The present volume begins in the aftermath of an economic disaster – the Great Depression – and ends in the political disaster of World War II. In spite of the darkened skies, the 1930s were years of optimistic planning,

animated by the widespread belief that economic and political orders were broken, and that an increasingly bureaucratized government, more formalized methods of data gathering, and the new tools of sociology could be turned in the service of solving the problems of education, land reform, the housing crisis, and economic uncertainty.[1] Although Eliot offers in this period some astute literary criticism, his prose is mainly engaged in these social questions that raged through the decade. Writing in 1934, Eliot confesses:

> At the present time I am not very much interested in the only subject which I am supposed to be qualified to write about: that is, one kind of literary criticism. I am not very much interested in literature, except dramatic literature; and I am largely interested in subjects which I do not yet know very much about: theology, politics, economics, and education. (5.126)

To these latter subjects, Eliot brought to bear his philosophical skepticism and the zeal of a recent Christian convert. The bookends of this volume, *After Strange Gods* (1934) and *The Idea of a Christian Society* (1939), are Eliot's major responses to the economic and political calamities of the 1930s, and as such, they partake in the culture's enthusiasm for planning and strategizing.[2] The later book concerns itself with "the organisation of values, and a direction of religious thought which must inevitably proceed to a criticism of political and economic systems" (5.684): the disciplines, and interrelated systems, in which Eliot schooled himself during the 1930s.

Abstract and theological plans rather than practical schemes, *After Strange Gods* and *The Idea of a Christian Society* both rehearse the terms in which the rest of the volume might be understood: tradition and orthodoxy. In *After Strange Gods*, Eliot defines tradition as "a way of feeling and acting which characterises a group throughout generations," habits which must be largely unconscious (5.25). Orthodoxy, by contrast, involves the realm of conscious discrimination. Together, tradition and orthodoxy are constitutive of a well-organized society directed toward proper ends: "the habits of the community formulated, corrected, and elevated by the continuous thought and direction of the Church" (5.40). While tradition provides the glue that holds a culture together, orthodoxy offers the standards for guiding its organic evolution. By encouraging the good and discouraging the bad, orthodoxy maintains a culture's wholeness and its relation to the past as well as prunes those elements that have become unnecessary or unhealthy.

For all of the ills of the world, Eliot prescribed more theology. To solve the problems of education – whom to educate, for how long, and to what purpose – one must have "a view of the nature of the Good Society, as well as an accurate understanding of the present state of society, and this brings us back to theology" (5.636). Elsewhere, he counsels: "I am certain that the theological background – however far back it may be – is the only one that can provide the idea of order and unity needed for education" (5.127). The problem of censorship is similarly bound up for Eliot in theological concerns: "If you are to make up your minds about the Censorship of Books you must first make up your minds about the Relation of Church and State. You must avoid the Scylla of theocracy and the Charybdis of totalitarianism" (5.266). Addressing what Eliot calls "the problem of the Land" (5.612) – growing sufficient crops, taming soil erosion, preserving natural resources, curbing urbanization – he insists that what is wrong with agriculture is related to "what is wrong with nearly everything else": with economics, with education, "indeed with our whole philosophy of life" – a secular philosophy that can only be corrected by theology (5.649). Nor does Eliot give artists a pass from his strictures: writers of religious drama are urged to acquire "an adequate knowledge of theology"; the Church, for its part, "should not tolerate the promulgation of unsound doctrine by great poets, or even by poets of great reputation. The Bolsheviks, who apparently take a keen interest in literature, ask no less in the matter of orthodoxy" (5.140).

Eliot's reference to the "orthodoxy" of communism was not entirely tongue-in-cheek. He attempted to make his use of the terms "tradition" and "orthodoxy" broader than their general usage implied: "As we use the term *tradition* to include a good deal more than 'traditional religious beliefs,' so I am here giving the term *orthodoxy* a similar inclusiveness" (5.20). In spite of his reassurance, orthodoxy has distinctive theological connotations, and Eliot clearly meant to keep them: right thinking can only mean right thinking by reference to a standard, and that standard for Eliot was inevitably Christian. His emphasis on orthodoxy, then, can seem stark and proscriptive in its rhetorical force. To modern sensibilities accustomed to secular logic or interreligious dialogue, the grounds of Eliot's argumentation appear provincial, a deliberate rejection of irenic modalities. And given Eliot's status as an amateur theologian, the relevance of orthodoxy to complex social problems can seem tenuous. A brutal example of his theological intransigence occurs in a footnote to his introduction to *Revelation*, where he protests that "the doctrine of the damnation of unbaptized infants has

been commonly rejected in recent times simply because it is repugnant." Eliot finds the shift in cultural sentiment an insufficient reason for altering church teaching: instead, "the development of the state of mind to which this doctrine is repugnant must itself be examined before we can accept it with confidence; and the question of the repugnance of a doctrine is not the same as that of its truth" (5.495-96). It is worth noting that even Eliot concedes that he is here considering "the extreme case," and further, that he is neither defending the teaching nor arguing for its suppression. Rather, he uses it as an example of the surreptitious way that secular thought has undermined a traditional belief without a corresponding theological explanation. If change is in the offing, Eliot requires theological wisdom to warrant the shift rather than sentimental humanism or cultural drift.[3]

Eliot's insistence on tradition and orthodoxy raises the question of whom he was rallying to the cause. In taking up Christian themes, Eliot had willingly abandoned Bloomsbury as an intended audience, but he did not replace it with an equally narrow wedge of the Anglo-Catholic faithful. His intention was to make orthodoxy appealing to a broad, ecumenical audience of Christians and sympathizers. Consequently, a historical context that needs to be recovered is the predominance of the Established Church in public discourse in the interwar years. Compared to earlier centuries, the influence of the Established Church was considerably weakened by the early 20th century. Nevertheless, even in the 1930s the British public was accustomed to Christian argumentation regarding social questions. The BBC, for example, was explicitly Christian in its aims and programming, even though that policy met with criticism; Sir John Reith, the first Director General of the BBC, indicated that he was "more anxious about the general religious policy of the BBC in matters great and small than in anything else."[4] While Roman and dissenting churches were granted some room in broadcast programing, non-Christian faiths had no voice, and the Established Church predominated in committee deliberations. Eliot's audiences – his readers and listeners – were thus conversant, and often in sympathy, with a Christian vision for Great Britain. Particular arguments within Eliot's commentaries engage prominent theologians and Christian thinkers such as Christopher Dawson, the Rev. V. A. Demant, John Middleton Murry, and Jacques Maritain. The notes to this volume attempt to illuminate these Christian contexts and interlocutors.

Although the general outlines of his thought – conservative tradition and Anglo-Catholic orthodoxy – were clear enough, his theology is

perhaps not so uncompromising as it first appears. Eliot's most combative theological gestures are often immediately qualified, and he is careful to delineate his field of inquiry and to profess his lack of qualifications:

> I am neither a sociologist nor an economist, and in any case it would be inappropriate, in this context, to produce any formula for setting the world right. It is much more the business of the Church to say what is wrong, that is, what is inconsistent with Christian doctrine, than to propose particular schemes of improvement. (5.736)

Such peripheral gestures are not the only place Eliot's tolerance is evident. The substance of his arguments directly engages the question of pluralism. For example, while the title of *The Idea of a Christian Society* might seem to exclude non-Christians, Eliot makes clear that he is not interested in sketching "a society consisting exclusively of devout Christians" (5.700). On the contrary, he seeks to include "persons of exceptional ability who may be indifferent or disbelieving; there will be room for a proportion of other persons professing other faiths than Christianity" (5.702). That these non-believers are restricted to "persons of exceptional ability," that only a "proportion" of Jews or Muslims would gain entry, appears intolerant from a secular vantage point. Nevertheless, this sketch of the non-believer's role (an idea rather than a percentage) reflects his broadening worldview, as contrasted with the starker theology of *After Strange Gods* (1934). In his later, 1939 text, *The Idea of a Christian Society*, Eliot's qualified inclusion of the non-believer recalls the earlier volume's more restricted viewpoint, and its most notorious sentence:

> The population should be homogeneous; where two or more cultures exist in the same place they are likely either to be fiercely self-conscious or both to become adulterate. What is still more important is unity of religious background; and reasons of race and religion combine to make any large number of free-thinking Jews undesirable. (5.20)

In response to sustained criticism of this remark, Eliot later protested that his "emphasis was on the adjective 'free-thinking'" (5.50): namely, those Jews who have lost their religious practices, rather than faithful Jews whose religious customs foster the very cohesion Eliot prizes. In spite of Eliot's attempts to soft-pedal this comment, it remains a jarring and ugly stain in his work, grammatically linking "Jews" – however qualified – with what is "undesirable." This linkage cannot be minimized, and it stands,

fortunately, at the far end on the spectrum of Eliot's sociological ideas, not all of them consistent with each other. While "homogeneity" presupposes the exclusion of difference, Eliot later posits cultural unity as the goal, a unity that presupposes the acceptance of difference. In *The Idea of a Christian Society*, Eliot tries to define, on the one hand, a unified culture whose traditions hold it together, while striving to avoid on the other hand an "ecclesiastical despotism" and "the complete disappearance of dissident sects" (5.705, 5.707). Having formulated the options in such a binary way, Eliot's preference can only lie with what he imagines will unite: "a positive culture must have a positive set of values, and the dissentients must remain marginal, tending to make only marginal contributions" (5.707). How it is all meant to work out is wholly unclear, because the practical plane is not Eliot's concern. Like Plato's *Republic*, *The Idea of a Christian Society* is meant to be understood as a thought-experiment, not as a blueprint for engineering such a community.

The increasingly tolerant ambit of his "idea" – rather than "ideal" – of a Christian society leads Eliot to speculate on the role of non-believers as they occupy positions of governance: "a skeptical or indifferent statesman, working within a Christian frame, might be more effective than a devout Christian statesman obliged to conform to a secular frame" (5.697). Given the compass of his study – a Christian society – it is again telling to see Eliot working so hard to imagine how non-Christians fit, contribute, and (modestly) thrive in such a world. Although Eliot would repudiate the term, his theology could be surprisingly progressive compared to other proponents of Christian thought in the 1930s. Addressing the quasi-missionary, though non-sectarian aims of the Save the Children Fund, Eliot remarks that in foreign lands, "its function might sometimes be to save the lives of children that they should be brought up in the faith of their ancestors, whatever that faith was" (5.353). That Eliot held such a charitable view of other faiths is evidence that the conundrum of unbaptized babies roasting in hell was not one that seriously exercised his imagination.

Eliot's tolerance – a function of his pragmatism – sat uneasily with his orthodox principles, a tension that is never fully resolved in his thinking. Whatever the sources of this irresolution, it is clear that the personal stakes for Eliot were high. In 1937, he writes poignantly: "There must be many like myself, who feel the daily strain of refusing to yield ourselves to the insistent claims of one extreme secular philosophy or another" (5.501). Two years later, the suffering he describes is again markedly personal: one

purpose for imagining a Christian society is "so that the difficulty of behaving as Christians should not impose an intolerable strain" (5.697). Such descriptions give us a glimpse into the intensity of Eliot's lived experience as a Christian. For Eliot, the Munich Pact of September 1938, in which Britain acceded to Hitler's occupation of the Sudetenland, pushed the "intolerable strain" to the breaking point. The illusion of Britain's probity as a Christian democracy could no longer be maintained. Sometime in late 1938 or early 1939, he wrote:

> It was not, I repeat, a criticism of the government, but a doubt of the validity of a civilisation. We could not match conviction with conviction, we had no ideas with which we could either meet or oppose the ideas opposed to us. Was our society, which had always been so assured of its superiority and rectitude, so confident of its unexamined premisses, assembled round anything more permanent than a congeries of banks, insurance companies and industries, and had it any beliefs more essential than a belief in compound interest and the maintenance of dividends? (5.717)

In 1938, Britain was militarily unprepared for a full-scale war over a country it could not defend and with which it had no defense agreement; among the British public, the Munich Pact was met with relief – until Hitler's invasion of rump Czechoslovakia in March 1939. But Eliot at once saw Chamberlain's "peace with honor" as a disastrous capitulation.

His dream of a unified European culture in tatters, Eliot shut down *The Criterion* in January 1939, confessing to "a depression of spirits so different from any other experience of fifty years as to be a new emotion" (5.663). Three years earlier, he had expressed reservations about his ability "to find and to print work of the best continental writers of all nations." The year 1936 marked a turning point:

> First, there seemed to be less and less from Italy; then less and less from Germany, and with the exception of a few Catholic writers, whose position I believe is more and more precarious, the German mentality seems to withdraw farther and farther from Western Europe. And the French, for the most part, seem to be engaged in their domestic political concerns. I am not speaking at the moment of poetry, but of intellectual activity in general: there seem to be fewer and fewer writers who are speaking not only to their own countrymen but to Europe as a whole.

> If this is so, it must mean a great impoverishment of intellectual life through continued in-breeding, everywhere. (5.307-08)

The impoverishment only worsened until, in the days immediately following the Munich Pact, Eliot began confidential discussions with Geoffrey Faber regarding the termination of *The Criterion*. Some of the reasons confessed to Faber were later publicly shared in Eliot's "Last Words": the likelihood of war, the impracticability of handing over the editorship to someone else, his feeling of staleness as an editor, and – he admitted humbly – "a suspicion that I ought to retire before I was aware that this feeling had communicated itself to the readers" (5.659). These public reasons were offered partly because Eliot wished to quash rumors of Faber's wartime retrenchment. In a letter to Geoffrey Faber, Eliot reassured his friend and chairman about ending *The Criterion*:

> you ought to know that for several years I have had doubts. These doubts do not merely stand for a conscientious thought that it is a waste of money for the firm. It is impossible to run a one-man show like this for fifteen years without feeling that it is going stale. I have run it without conviction for several years; only I felt that so long as you and Frank [Morley] felt that it was of some advertising value to the firm – or that my chief use to the firm was running *The Criterion* – I couldn't well give it up.[5]

With the possibility of war postponed rather than averted, Eliot willingly tossed aside *The Criterion*, wishing "to see the decks kept a bit clearer" for Faber's business interests.[6]

II

For the question of Eliot's political thought in the interwar years, the advantages of the present volume are that it contains unpublished lectures on political topics and that these lectures and broadcasts are arranged in chronological order with previously published material, allowing us to reevaluate the shifts in emphases and lines of attack as the political ground of Europe altered. One constant in that decade was Eliot's Christian commitments, which provide a useful interpretive frame for understanding his near-despairing critiques of liberal democracy and his sustained, if lopsided, attacks on fascism and communism. Because he had a grudging respect for communism as a philosophical and pseudo-religious system, Eliot saw it as the more formidable enemy: "Communism, and its perhaps

only temporary opponent Fascism, demand an emotional reorganisation as well as a material one; they demand a *diversion* of the thought and emotion which the Christian offers to God alone" (5.347). And while neither fascism nor communism were compatible with Christianity in Eliot's view, either of them might have elements to be borrowed for fixing the creaky mechanisms of liberal democracy and the profit motives of capitalism.[7]

Eliot's Christian commitments required charity in speaking of one's enemies – even enemies with large armies across a narrow channel – and humility in accepting one's own weaknesses. The secular reformer, by contrast, had no such restriction: "for the most part he conceives of the evils of the world as something external to himself. . . . [I]f there is evil *incarnate*, it is always incarnate in the *other people* – a class, a race, the politicians, the bankers, the armament makers, and so forth – never in oneself" (5.426-27).[8] Categorical denunciation is a thrill reserved for the secular reformer: "to be able to simplify issues so as to see only the definite external enemy, is extremely exhilarating, and brings about the bright eye and the springy step that go so well with the political uniform. This is an exhilaration that the Christian must deny himself" (5.427). In light of Eliot's recurrent remarks that both fascism and communism held "fundamental ideas which are incompatible with Christianity" (5.425), one might expect Eliot's vehement condemnations of either ideology. Yet he constantly restrained himself, turning his criticisms inward:

> I do not propose to take up the rest of my time by denouncing Fascism and Communism. This task has been more ably performed by others, and the conclusions may be taken for granted. By pursuing this charge, I might obtain from you a kind of approval that I do not want. I suspect that a good deal of the dislike of these philosophies in this country is due to the wrong reasons as well as the right, and is coloured with complacency and sanctimony. It is easy, safe and pleasant to criticise foreigners; and it has the advantage of distracting attention from the evils of our own society. (5.425)

On the home front, democracy had its own problems, particularly the inefficacy of democratic governments and the League of Nations to oppose fascism and communism or to address the economic troubles which had fueled such extreme ideologies. The force of Eliot's critique could lead a careless reader to assume he was rejecting democracy, and so he clarified. "I cannot share enthusiastically in this vigorous repudiation of 'democracy,'"

Eliot complained in 1928. "When the whole world repudiates one silly idea, there is every chance that it will take up with another idea just as silly or sillier" (3.545-46). Instead, the problem as Eliot frames it consists in how to renew democracy: "The modern question as popularly put is: 'democracy is dead; what is to replace it?' whereas it should be: 'the frame of democracy has been destroyed: how can we, out of the materials at hand, build a new structure in which democracy can live?'" (3.546). For Eliot, proponents of democracy had consciences that were no cleaner than the fascists' or the communists': "The term 'democracy' must continue to be used, because it is sacred to the British mind; and it will continue to be used by people whose activities are really directed towards one kind of oligarchy or another – the kind of oligarchy you happen to prefer will always be the one which is 'democracy'" (5.564). Nor did Eliot's critique of democracy result in the knee-jerk defense of empire that might be expected of a conservative, even as he deploys without qualms the racialized language of empire: "How many lower peoples have been, on balance, really helped by European intervention? And until we set in order our own crazy economic and financial systems, to say nothing of our philosophy of life, can we be sure that our helping hands to the barbarian and the savage will be any more desirable than the embrace of the leper?" (5.274).

Secularism, another of Eliot's common targets, was the consequence of liberal democracy's negative culture. It was not the insipid distractions from the spiritual life that worried Eliot the most, those "various temptations to live on a simply animal level" (5.484). These were merely symptoms, or contemporary forms "of the permanent force of the world against which the spirit must always struggle" (5.485). Along with ineffective democracy and secularism, liberalism – long deplored by Eliot – completes the unholy trinity of modern culture. By 1939, Eliot's view of liberalism had darkened considerably. Following V. A. Demant, Eliot had come to believe that liberalism, the cultural heritage of the nineteenth century, had prepared the way for totalitarianism by

> destroying traditional social habits of the people, by dissolving their natural collective consciousness into individual constituents, by licensing the opinions of the most foolish, by substituting instruction for education, by encouraging cleverness rather than wisdom, the upstart rather than the qualified, by fostering a notion of *getting on* to which the alternative is a hopeless apathy . . . . (5.689-90)

Liberalism, in Eliot's view, carried the seeds of its own destruction: "the artificial, mechanised or brutalised control which is a desperate remedy for its chaos" (5.690).[9] As is typical of Eliot's thought, he circles back to qualify his denunciation:

> I shall have expressed myself very ill if I give the impression that I think of Liberalism as something simply to be rejected and extirpated, as an evil for which there is a simple alternative. It is a necessary negative element . . . In the sense in which Liberalism is contrasted with Conservatism, both can be equally repellent: if the former can mean chaos, the latter can mean petrifaction. (5.690)

The loneliness of his position sometimes led Eliot into intemperate defenses of his friends, such as Wyndham Lewis, whose political sympathies were further to the right: "As for Mr. Lewis's politics, I see no reason to suppose that he is any more of a 'fascist' or 'nazi' than I am. People are annoyed by finding that you are not on their side; and if you are not, they prefer you to surrender yourself to the other: if you can see the merits, as well as the faults, of parties to which you do not belong, that is still worse" (5.575). It is perhaps not surprising that even after the declaration of war, Eliot was urging Christian humility and self-criticism in dealing with Germany, but it must have been disconcerting for his readers – British citizens once again sending their young to die in a terrible war – to be chided: "We cannot effectively denounce the enemy without understanding him; we cannot understand him unless we understand ourselves, and our own weaknesses and sins" (5.677). This kind of homiletic meditation, while salutary for the Christian soul, does not read in quite the same way to a nation under siege by fascist troops.[10]

Skepticism for Eliot was a virtue. It was not the opposite of faith, but a component of humility: a skeptic, for Eliot, was someone "who suspects the origins of his own beliefs, as well as those of others; who is most suspicious of those which are most passionately held; who is still more relentless towards his own beliefs than towards those of others; who suspects other people's motives because he has learned the deceitfulness of his own" (5.154). Philosophically, he was a skeptic, and theologically he believed in original sin; together, these fundamental orientations made it difficult for him to uphold the kind of aggrieved moral superiority which his critics expected of him, especially in condemning the murderous ideology of fascism. Eliot mounted a principled, rather than polemical, resistance to both

fascism and communism, ideologies that demanded unthinking allegiance rather than welcomed critical resistance. In a world careening toward war, calling out mob thinking – "minds inflamed by passion" (5.692) – was for Eliot a stark, prophetic task. A "coldly theological" tract was how his friend John Hayward described *The Idea of a Christian Society*.[11]

Communism receives a greater proportion of Eliot's criticism than fascism, not because of the foreign threat that Russian armies represented, but because of domestic enthusiasm for the idea of communism. Writing in the July 1937 *Criterion*, Hugh Gordon Porteus declared: "The reading public here is now almost unanimously pro-Left and anti-Fascist."[12] Such a sweeping judgment – even though it delimits the "reading public" rather than the general public – masked a more complicated reality, but it was not untrue. It was this left-leaning bias to which the editor and writers of the right-leaning *Criterion* addressed themselves. *The Criterion*'s preferred politics has been described by Jason Harding as "a strain of Tory-Anglican conservatism" that depended upon a

> nostalgia for the patrimony of a Latin-Christian tradition, an act of creative historical imagination that searched the past for continuity and order. This decidedly reactionary response to contemporary cultural and political developments, threatening an idealized "mind of Europe," was enveloped by the wider "myth of catastrophe" that coloured intellectual debate in the 1930s.[13]

The characterization of *The Criterion* as "reactionary" is not a left-wing insult, but a precise description of Eliot's theologically inflected politics. As a reaction to the divided political scene, Eliot's politics were clearly a rejection of the liberal worldview, but they were further differentiated from modern Conservatism, which downplayed the Church-State alliance of the Tory inheritance and which, in Eliot's view, shared with liberalism an unfounded, optimistic belief in the capitalist market.

As the political tragedies of the 1930s unfolded, Eliot's attitudes toward fascism and communism were clear enough and repeatedly offered, but the ways in which he expressed his criticisms – and the ways in which they were heard by diverse audiences – were complicated by a number of interrelated factors: (1) his philosophical skepticism, which was often conveyed as a determination to see all sides of every issue; (2) his political conservatism, which goaded him to push against the liberal tide; (3) his frustration with the ineffectiveness of liberal democracy, which taken in isolation

could sound like a rejection of democracy; (4) his non-specialist's interest in political theory, which led him to value the abstract idea rather than to evaluate the real threat; and (5) his commitment to Christian humility and self-criticism, which refused to blame a foreign enemy, and which excoriated the weaknesses of British domestic policy. These overlapping combinations, particularly Eliot's ecumenical skepticism – exposing the humbug in all political positions, especially ones dear to the British heart – and his preference for the abstractions of political theory, were a source of cool analytical insight into domestic and foreign politics as well as a handicap in understanding the practical dangers fascism posed. It might be argued that Eliot's version of Christianity was no more than political quietism, or that he was committed to a heavenly perfection rather than to an attainable, earthly justice. However, given his appraisals of fascism, neither critique warrants projecting fascist sympathies *tout court* onto his worldview. To a secular world that would flatten his Christian principles to the political plane, Eliot affirmed the primacy of the religious: "the Church cannot be, in any political sense, either conservative, or liberal, or revolutionary. Conservatism is too often conservation of the wrong things; liberalism a relaxation of discipline; revolution a denial of the permanent things" (5.428). Against all claims of national or ideological allegiance, only the tradition and orthodoxy of Christianity would call forth Eliot's full-throated endorsement.

III

These are the various contexts and commitments that led to Eliot's unintentionally public stand on the Spanish Civil War, for which he was roundly criticized. Eliot found that he could support neither the left nor the right, those "[i]rresponsible zealots who have advocated 'intervention' on one side or the other" (5.411). While Eliot would not be drawn in by arguments from the left, neither would he be convinced by the Catholic right that it was a holy war.[14] Writing in January of 1937, Eliot feared the consequences for public discussion in Great Britain would be "a deterioration of political thinking" (5.410). Six months later, Eliot saw no improvement in the discourse: "The situation in Spain has provided the perfect opportunity for extremists of both extremes. To turn from the shrill manifestoes of the Extreme Left, and the indiscretions of the Dean of Canterbury, to the affirmations of Mr. Jerrold and Mr. Lunn, is only to intensify the nightmare" (5.507). A careful and precise thinker, Eliot had no stomach for the

exaggerations and vituperations of realpolitik, but neither could he avert his gaze.

A questionnaire, organized by Nancy Cunard, asked authors for their declarations in support either of "the legal Government and the People of Republican Spain" or of "Franco and Fascism." The responses were published as *Authors Take Sides on the Spanish War*, with the overwhelming majority "For the Government" and a mere five "Against the Government." A few writers, Eliot among them, were classified as "Neutral?" – the question mark an editorial indicator that there could be no such thing as neutrality on such an issue. Eliot was cited, to his surprise, as saying: "While I am naturally sympathetic, I still feel convinced that it is best that at least a few men of letters should remain isolated, and take no part in these collective activities."[15] He complained privately that he only meant to express sympathy with Cunard's project, not a particular political view.[16] Taken by itself, Eliot's refusal to stake out a position may appear petty and irritable, especially considering the opportunism of Franco's coup. However, against the backdrop of his wider concerns – combatting a broken and negative culture, affirming a positive Christianity – Eliot's uneasy neutrality can be understood as a consequence of his belief that the Universal Church must always trump nationality, and that "men of letters" should be committed to a European ideal rather than a provincial cause.

Eliot's critics on the left would hear such maneuvers neither as Christian humility nor as high-minded skepticism. To those inflamed with political passions, Eliot's intellectual skepticism and endlessly deferred judgments amounted to a covert endorsement of fascism. But Eliot's view of fascism was colored by his understanding of its weaker British variant, which he neither feared nor respected. Writing in 1939, Eliot recalled that British fascism, in the increasingly discredited person of Oswald Mosley and in the party of the British Union, "appeared to have no great intellectual interest – and what is perhaps more important, was not sufficiently adaptable to be grafted on to the stock of Toryism – whereas communism flourished because it grew so easily on the Liberal root" (5.662).[17] Indeed, Eliot's political judgments, rendered from the abstract plane of political philosophy and theology, led him to underestimate Hitler's intentions: as late as 1937, he was still referring to the "bogey of fascism" (5.470). From the vantage point of Britain in the 1920s – when the Weimar Republic seemed to be managing its political and economic crises tolerably well, and Italian fascism was a distant development – Eliot's remarks on fascism as an idea,

starting in 1928, appear commendably skeptical.[18] While Eliot noted the thuggery behind the civic order that fascism imposed, his primary concern was whether fascism, as a political idea, offered anything new as its proponents had claimed: "I am all the more suspicious of fascism as a panacea," Eliot wrote in 1928, "because I fail so far to find in it any important element, beyond this comfortable feeling that we shall be benevolently ordered about, which was not already in existence" (3.546-47).[19] Unfortunately, it did not seem to occur to Eliot that by 1937 such intellectual niceties would appear increasingly blinkered. From the comfortable remove of a quarterly review, fascism and communism were treated not as the bloody fodder of the dailies and weeklies, but as political theories. Addressing the intractable mess of the Abyssinian Crisis in January 1936, Eliot defends his high ground:

> If – what is often doubted – there remains any place for quarterly reviews in the modern world, their task is surely to concern themselves with political philosophy, rather than with politics, and with the examination of the fundamental ideas of philosophies rather than with the problems of application. (5.311)

Ringing denunciations of fascism from the editor of a literary magazine would have done nothing to stop the tanks in any event, and so the inadequacy of Eliot's interventions should not be overstated. Eliot chastised himself for not being more useful as an intellectual. In January 1939, he wrote, "I have wondered whether it would not have been more profitable, instead of trying to maintain literary standards increasingly repudiated in the modern world, to have endeavoured to rally intellectual effort to affirm those principles of life and policy from the lack of which we are suffering disastrous consequences" (5.662). In spite of his demurral, this "rally [of] intellectual effort," of course, is exactly what he had been attempting for many years. A month after the declaration of war, Eliot wrote even more defensively about the role of ideas in practical life:

> we have to take great care neither to over-estimate nor to under-estimate the importance of ideas; and not to confuse the plane on which only material forces and their intelligent direction count, with the plane on which ideas are important. To mistake the operation of ideas is to provoke the conclusion that they do not matter at all. (5.680)

Bearing in mind that charged political debates can illuminate as well as obscure, a more ordinary example, with less electricity about it, may clarify

the direction of Eliot's thought. In his October 1934 "Commentary," Eliot picks up the problem of the National Trust, an organization devoted to preserving "beauty spots" in the British countryside and maintaining buildings of historic interest. The background of these preservation activities involves the housing crisis that had begun in the pre-war era and that was pressurized by World War I and the interwar period.[20] Starting in 1919, various Housing Acts offered government subsidies to local councils for building housing estates, dramatically increasing the scale of public sector housing, including unsightly "ribbon developments" that popped up on main roads or wherever land was cheap. While governments predictably react (or fail to react) to urgent pressures, Eliot reacts to the immediate problem by complaining about the ugly new projects, but then he moves to the philosophical plane. Although he commends the work done to date and salutes the broad support the National Trust has garnered, the busy work of preservation begs an underlying question: "what is the process going on, the existence of which is tacitly assumed by these worthy efforts? Does it lead to the eventual partition of England into two parts, one overrun and ravaged by human beings, and the other protected from human beings[?]"(5.132). What does it mean, Eliot wonders, to live in a society whose landscape and resources have to be protected from itself? The National Trust is not the problem, Eliot explains; rather, the problem is with the society that requires the services of such an organization, a society that does not understand the direction or the forces of its economic growth and cannot articulate the criteria it uses to preserve or destroy. If any of the hard-pressed directors of the National Trust were aware of Eliot's critique, they must have read with dismay the arduous enterprise Eliot recommends: "we should like all the people interested in the preservation of 'beauty spots' to investigate a state of society in which beauty spots have to be preserved" (5.133).

Eliot's stance in this "Commentary" can be read as perilously close to the condescending attitudes the upper classes held toward the housing boom and the lower classes that fueled it: he decries the greedy "private interests" that throw up shoddy buildings for the "more vulgarized populations" (5.135). Nevertheless, Eliot's starting point is the ideal organization of society, not fear of lower-class contamination. (His endpoint is also similar to his other commentaries: he has no practical solutions to recommend.) Nor can his concerns be distilled to the crassly political. Conservatives and Liberals each had their reasons for supporting home ownership in the

1930s: the Conservatives because ownership encouraged the working class to invest in the status quo and to ignore radical calls for economic restructuring, the Liberals because ownership gave the working class status, stability, and freedom from extortionate rents.[21]

In fact, Eliot took a personal interest in the problem of housing for the poor, appealing in a BBC broadcast for funds to build a new community hall that would serve a block of Housing Trust Flats. Though he grumbled off the record about the futility of such appeals, he dutifully adopted a tone of sweet earnestness that was clearly alien to his "cold and precise" temperament (as he described it) (5.408). The new hall, Eliot spoke into the BBC microphone, "will cost £5,000. That is just one pound each for the health and happiness of the 5,000 present inhabitants. It is not a large sum, per human being, is it? If you saw the children you would think them worth a pound each" (5.408). The concrete issue of housing for the poor – and the related, abstract issue of social organization – engaged Eliot's "cold and precise" intellect as well as the warm *caritas* that was a hallmark of his life as a public servant. As a consequence, Eliot's position on this issue cannot be reduced to the clumsy categories of the political. His position was a curious mixture of the aesthetic and the sociological, with the implicitly theological the fundamental concern: a coherent community, bound together by tradition and guided by orthodoxy.

IV

Compared to the narrowly literary focus of his essays in the teens and early twenties, what is striking in this volume is the range of Eliot's communitarian concerns. Though the major social and political crises of the decade receive his sustained attention, no cultural dust-up is too inconspicuous for his commentary, and even humble causes capture his attention, such as the BBC Appeal for the new community hall. Commending Charles Whibley and A. R. Orage as model writers of occasional commentary, Eliot unintentionally describes himself in his best "Commentary" mode:

> The ideal commentator must be attentive to current events, with an amused attention to the *faits divers*, as well as to the headlines, and must be sensitive to the symbolic importance of the petty, as well as to the insignificance of the sensational. He should enjoy the bioscope of contemporary history as a spectacle, and at one moment criticise events with fixed principles and convictions in his mind, and at

> another illustrate some principle from some passing object of notice. (5.281)

Eliot's widening purview can be tracked in several ways: the increasing number of his letters to the editor that address political and social issues; his commentaries in *The Criterion* and *The New English Weekly* that are shaped by pressing issues on the civic, national, and international levels; the topics of his major works *After Strange Gods* and *The Idea of a Christian Society*, which give sustained attention to important religious and political issues; the abundance of invitations he accepts to address varied audiences, such as schoolchildren, undergraduates, and religious organizations; and the varied nature of his broadcast talks, with many of them exceeding the bounds of the literary-critical. Eliot humorously complains of his inability to turn down such work: "I find that the number of things one is called upon to do, in middle age, increases much more rapidly than one's income – such as taking the chair at meetings, speaking on behalf of good causes, and giving lectures to institutions which can't afford to pay for them" (5.246).

Even though Eliot's contributions to literary criticism during this period are not as extensive as his earlier work, they are no less insightful or authoritative. Nor are his writings on literature divorced from the religious and social concerns that are the focus of his thought in this period. His essay "Religion and Literature" (1935) further refines his moral theory of literature, begun some years earlier in his engagements with Baudelaire. "All first-rate poetry is occupied with morality," Eliot had declared in 1921: "this is the lesson of Baudelaire. More than any poet of his time, Baudelaire was aware of what most mattered: the problem of good and evil" (2.306). Eliot had refrained from bringing the moral dimension into the aesthetic principles developed in *The Sacred Wood* (1920), but when he wrote the Preface to the 1928 edition of that volume he stated that he had "passed on to another problem not touched upon in this book: that of the relation of poetry to the spiritual and social life of its times and other times," and he concluded that poetry "certainly has something to do with morals, and with religion, and even with politics perhaps, though we cannot say what" (3.413-14). In *After Strange Gods* he replaced the critical terms "classicism" and "romanticism" with "orthodoxy" and "heresy," holding that the earlier terms "do not carry with them the implication of absolute value which those who have defended one against the other would give them" (5.26). By the time he wrote "Religion and Literature" he could say exactly what

morals had to do with poetry: "Literary criticism should be completed by criticism from a definite ethical and theological standpoint. . . . The 'greatness' of literature cannot be determined solely by literary standards; though we must remember that whether it is literature or not can be determined only by literary standards" (5.218). As Eliot was refining his moral theory of literature, the New Criticism – a formalist hermeneutic that protected aesthetic concerns from moral and historical contamination – was simultaneously developing, heavily dependent upon Eliot's early aesthetic essays as its source and inspiration; the New Critics would not follow Eliot into this moral terrain of the 1930s.

In *After Strange Gods*, Eliot had articulated a principle that connected writers to their childhood religion: "individual writers can be understood and classified according to the type of Protestantism which surrounded their infancy, and the precise state of decay which it had reached" (5.31). Applying this principle, Eliot neatly turns Byron criticism on its head. Although Eliot claims to be bracketing the personality and only considering the poetry, the biographical figure of Byron, in Eliot's telling, is no longer the handsome, Romantic aristocrat heroically acting on the world stage, but a provincial narcissist turned to seed: a pudgy, Scottish-Calvinist libertine who (Eliot sniffs, in a graver put-down than his aesthetic objections) does not know enough about Catholic confession to use that trope plausibly in a narrative. Each of Eliot's author criticisms from this period hinges on a core biographical insight such as this one: Milton's blindness, Tennyson's depression, Shakespeare's "private mystery," and Marston's rebelliousness.

In his first major essay on Milton, Eliot introduces his theory of the auditory imagination, complaining that the great poet's convoluted syntax "is determined by the musical significance, by the auditory imagination, rather than by the attempt to follow actual speech or thought" (5.375). It was Milton's blindness that led to an overactive auditory imagination, the complications of his style dictated "by a demand of verbal music, instead of by any demand of sense" (5.374). Eliot similarly upends Tennyson criticism: while the nineteenth century valued Tennyson's *In Memoriam* for the quality of its faith, Eliot values it for "the quality of its doubt" (5.330). Nor is Tennyson the serene sage of late-nineteenth-century criticism. In Eliot's biographical emphasis, there is a curious "lack of serenity" in poems dedicated to Tennyson's late friend (5.326). Tennyson's grief can attain "no ultimate clear purgation": "there is plenty of evidence of emotional

intensity and violence – but of emotion so deeply suppressed, even from himself, as to tend rather towards the blackest melancholia than towards dramatic action" (5.326). This suppression of emotion on the biographical level corresponds to the absence of an objective correlative in the poetry. This evasiveness in turn weakens the moral fiber of the poetry, and ultimately accounts for Tennyson's waning reputation:

> Tennyson faced neither the darkness nor the light in his later years. The genius, the technical power, persisted to the end, but the spirit had surrendered. . . . And having turned aside from the journey through the dark night, to become the surface flatterer of his own time, he has been rewarded with the despite of an age that succeeds his own in shallowness. (5.331)

In two newly published lectures from 1937 (revised 1941), collectively titled "The Development of Shakespeare's Verse," Eliot's biographical insight into the trajectory of Shakespeare's development relies on an intuition that, by mid-career, Shakespeare had exhausted the dramatic possibilities of the stage; thenceforward, the playwright disappeared into the enigmas of his later plays. In the first half of Shakespeare's career, Eliot finds "a gradual, but irregular development while Shakespeare is learning the possibilities of the stage and of language, up to the point at which his fully developed dramatic skill occurs in a play in which the maximum of the ultra-dramatic is maintained in solution in what the audience can take" (5.539). That midpoint, Eliot argues, is *Hamlet*. He takes this opportunity to revise his earlier, famous objection regarding the layers of *Hamlet*'s construction, while at the same time developing his theory of double-planes of reality, in which "a hidden and mysterious pattern of reality appears as from a palimpsest" (5.538). The later, post-*Hamlet* plays "are the work of a writer who has finally seen through the dramatic action of men into a spiritual action which transcends it" (5.554). The marvelous strangeness of the late plays is memorably described from the perspective of the disappearing genius who wrote them for his own inscrutable purposes:

> It seems to me to correspond to some profound law of nature, that in the work of such a man as Shakespeare you should find a point at which he touches the imagination and feeling of the greatest number of people to the greatest possible depth, and that thereafter, like a comet continuing its course away from the earth, he should gradually disappear into his private mystery. (5.549)

Having already explored the relationship of criticism to poetry – especially in such poet-critics as Dryden, Johnson, Arnold, and Coleridge – in *The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism*, Eliot turns in this period to literary figures known primarily for their poetry or drama rather than for their prose criticism: Milton, Byron, Tennyson, Marston, Shakespeare, and Cowley. In this period, Eliot also produces major statements on living authors whom he admired, in his introductions to the work of Djuna Barnes and Marianne Moore.

When Eliot confessed, in 1934, that he was "not very much interested in literature, except dramatic literature," he was not being coy (5.126). By this point, he was not focused on writing poetry, and he had given up the failed experimental style of *Sweeney Agonistes* (1923-27), having adapted a more approachable style for a wide audience of theatergoers. In this period, his willingness to reach a broader audience resulted in three successfully produced, if artistically uneven, plays: *The Rock* (1934), *Murder in the Cathedral* (1935), and *The Family Reunion* (1939). Only one major poem, *Burnt Norton* (1936), was written during this timeframe, as well as a smattering of minor poems later collected as "Landscapes" (1936) and the collection of cat poems published as *Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats* (1939). In November of 1939, the Faber sales manager, W. J. Crawley, reported that "*Cats* are giving general satisfaction."[22]

V

The year 1934 marked a period of new beginnings for Eliot, and not only in his writing for the stage or his socially engaged prose. His personal life took on an altogether different shape after his return from America in the summer of 1933. Having separated from his first wife, Vivien, after seventeen grim years, he lived in ad hoc arrangements, eventually finding stable lodgings as a tenant with the Rev. Eric Cheetham in late 1934. Though Eliot was living apart from Vivien, he remained, along with her brother Maurice, involved in her financial and legal affairs, as well as in the practical arrangements concerning the separation. Eliot was not, however, directly involved in Vivien's certification and confinement in an asylum in 1938; Maurice Haigh-Wood kept Eliot informed of the difficult circumstances and decisions prompted by her increasingly erratic behavior. Even after the separation, Eliot remained on close terms with his brother-in-law, who continued to advise Eliot on financial matters. Biographers have suggested that Eliot's separation from Vivien and his guilt at her subsequent decline

haunted Eliot during this period. Lyndall Gordon has connected their painful separation to the starkness of many of Eliot's works written in this period: "The need to explore, diagnose, and eradicate evil was the prime motive for several great works which all had their origin in the gravest moral crisis of his life from 1934 to 1938."[23] Similarly, Peter Ackroyd's biography of the poet suggests that the lectures of *After Strange Gods* betray Eliot's precarious emotional state: "He was, after all, about to leave his wife and thereby perhaps push her further into madness – perhaps it was his own fear of having no moral sense which prompted him into making moral formulations in this obsessive way."[24] As Ackroyd's two "perhapses" indicate, such explanations of this period are not entirely convincing, since Eliot's moral formulations are part of a larger project of Christian renewal that began long before his separation from Vivien.

There is undoubtedly a tone of sour pessimism that can be found throughout this period. In April of 1938, Eliot seems to call into question the very premise of *The Criterion* – cross-cultural understanding in a unified Europe: "And does a better understanding of the national outlook of another country always help to keep the peace?" (5.610). Sometimes bitter skepticism overwhelmed his principles: "if we understood other countries better, would we like them any better? – though we might be better able to get the better of them. 'Mutual understanding' seems to me likely to be merely a nice way of ignoring economic conflicts between countries" (5.611). And in 1935, in an essay on "Literature in the Modern World," he generalized about human experience in a way that is unmistakably personal: "There are moments, perhaps not known to everyone, when a man may be nearly crushed by the terrible awareness of his isolation from every other human being" (5.198).

Yet these despairing noises co-existed with happier sounds. This same year, 1935, saw a number of tongue-in-cheek letters to the editor on the momentous topic of cheese and a call for a formation of a Society for the Preservation of Ancient Cheeses (5.286, 5.290). Again in the same year, he described himself to his former Harvard classmates: "I like certain very simple and humane kinds of practical joke. Which reminds me that I am also, at the moment of writing, a Churchwarden" (5.247). Beginning his long period of humble service as a churchwarden at St. Stephen's in 1934, Eliot had an inside track to the tedious machinations of church committees. He joked about ecclesial gear-grinding: "The Reports which are unread, or unreadable, are sometimes the best reading . . . Unless they are

concerned with affairs in the Church of England, they may, by some obscure channel, lead to something happening" (5.672).

Another source of joy for Eliot in this period was the arrival in England of his first love from his days at Harvard, Emily Hale, who came to stay for a year starting in September 1934. Eliot had renewed his contact with her at least by September 1923, when he sent her an inscribed copy of *Ara Vos Prec*, and she made short visits to London from 1927 to 1930. Now their friendship would flourish, inspiring some of Eliot's most resonant poetry in *Burnt Norton*, and sustaining him spiritually through long periods of separation. Through his associations with *The New English Weekly*, in late 1934 Eliot became a member of the Chandos Group, regular meetings of intellectuals interested in economic reform and Christian sociology: as a consequence, Eliot's interest in Christian sociology was no longer a solitary enterprise, but a communal one. Later, in April of 1938, he joined the Moot, another working group of intellectuals interested in Christian leadership and social reform.

These were ascetic years of penance and public service, but also of freedom from Vivien's wild moods and emotional demands. In a letter written late in 1939, Eliot commiserated with his friend John Hayward:

> Well, I think that I can understand, as well as could be expected, your feeling of 'having never expected or hoped for very much' etc. At least, I have no family, no career, and nothing particular to look forward to in this world. I doubt the permanent value of everything I have written; I never lay with a woman I liked, loved or even felt any strong physical attraction to; I no longer even regret this lack of experience; I no longer even feel acutely the desire for progeny which was very acute once; and since I became a Christian I feel that the only difficulty I should have in a monastic life – which is easy to say because I am not free to enter a monastery – would be the deprivation of French tobacco.

This letter has been quoted by critics to indicate the extent of Eliot's unhappiness during this period of his life. Yet later in the letter, even in the same paragraph cited above, he writes: "I have been very fortunate however, and the last six years have been the only happy years of my life – but that is a good many."[25]

The years of this volume were, in Eliot's own estimation, happy years rather than years of moral horror. His guilt over Vivien's decline coexisted with his relief at freedom from domestic conflict. His crushing sense of

isolation coincided with his collegial relationships at Faber and *The Criterion*, his friendships with a chosen few, and his active prayer life. His dark pessimism about international affairs coexisted – or vacillated – with his calm sense of duty as a Christian and his civic obligations as a public intellectual. That sense of obligation included wartime duties, for as he wrote in *The Idea of a Christian Society*, he could respect a person who fights for a particular pacifist cause, yet he could not reconcile himself to the idea of absolute pacifism, because it contradicted his idea of community:

> The notion of communal responsibility, of the responsibility of every individual for the sins of the society to which he belongs, is one that needs to be more firmly apprehended; and if I share the guilt of my society in time of "peace," I do not see how I can absolve myself from it in time of war, by abstaining from the common action. (5.722)

After the outbreak of war, Eliot cast about for odd jobs in the war effort, having been warned away from the Ministry of Information by his friend Stephen Gaselee.[26] Within a few months, he would be enlisted as an air raid warden. Writing to his friend Conrad Aiken in late 1939, Eliot summarized his prospects for the future: "So far as I can foresee, I shall plod along at the old job, varied by some wartime activities of the unpaid sort: with a dwindling income, no doubt, and I do not know whether any time or enthusiasm for trying to write poetry."[27] What he could not foresee was how fully employed and engaged he would become with the cultural restoration and reunification of Europe during and after the war, or how more deeply conscious he would become of the responsibilities of the Christian intellectual in solving those problems, of being in the world and of the world. That reengagement would bring a revitalization of his poetry – the completion of *Four Quartets*. It would bring the return to literary criticism, with new essays on Tennyson, Poe, Yeats, Kipling, and Joyce. It would bring new meditations on the nature of poetry – its social function, its music, its several voices, its minor forms. It would bring in due course the Nobel Prize for Literature.

NOTES

1. For social, economic and political contexts, I have relied on several histories: Juliet Gardiner's *The Thirties: An Intimate History* (London: Harper, 2010); Gardiner's *Wartime: Britain 1939-1945* (London: Headline, 2004); and Martin Pugh's *We Danced All Night: A Social History of Britain between the Wars* (London: Vintage, 2009).

2. Though published in 1934, *After Strange Gods* was originally given as a series of lectures in May of 1933, near the end of Eliot's academic year abroad. For the contexts of all of the lectures from his time in America, see the introduction to volume 4.

3. As a technical matter, the pronouncement about unbaptized infants in particular was never formal "doctrine" in Roman or Anglican theology, only the more general rule: *extra ecclesiam nulla salus*. Eliot conveniently forgets that it was orthodox medieval theologians who introduced the idea of Limbo – also never a formal doctrine – as a way of checking the severity of this teaching.

4. Asa Briggs, *The History of Broadcasting in the United Kingdom: Vol II: The Golden Age of Wireless* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1995) 211; see also Gardiner, 509.

5. Letter to Faber, 1 Oct 1938.

6. Letter to Faber, 1 Oct 1938.

7. "I do not suggest that the Christian cannot learn from either fascism or communism. In so far as both philosophies differ from the actual way of things, they may have elements of good in them; indeed, without these elements of good, and without their explicit condemnations of the evils of nineteenth-century democracy, they could not have the appeal that they have" (5.188).

8. Eliot's defense of Jews was usually more reticent than his complaints about them: here he finds it unacceptable that "a race" or "bankers" bear the burdens of a scapegoat. Likewise, Eliot's chiding of Pound's anti-Semitism was done privately, even as he championed Pound's work publicly. Regarding the libelous remarks of forthcoming *Cantos*, Eliot writes to Pound: "I don't find anything libellious about Chinese emperors that isn't made safe by lapse of time, similarly about the Adams's, but they [Faber directors] now agree with me that if you remain keen on jew-baiting, that is your affair, but that name of Rothschild should be omitted" (15 July 1939). A few days later, on 18 Jul 1939, Eliot wrote to Margaret Gardiner, declining to sign manifestos "which merely reiterate what it should be assumed that every rightminded person feels. . . . And I believe that the important moment for collective statements about anti-semitism will be later, if, as is possible, that mania is further exploited in this country."

9. Writing later in 1939, in a review of Demant's *Religious Prospect*, Eliot declared: "Liberalism (that combination of 'doctrine' and 'dogma' which held together during the Nineteenth Century) is something which leads . . . to modern totalitarianism, and is indeed a phase without an understanding of which totalitarianism itself cannot be understood" (5.680).

10. Eliot's intellectual humility still had an edge: he is skilled at the sly insult, as when he takes down the Rev. J. C. Hardwick in his *Criterion* "Commentary" of Oct 1935. His polite disagreements intensify until, with a parenthetical sleight of hand, Eliot knocks Hardwick off his perch: "I only take him as a common type of verbal zealot" (5.275). Hardwick is not even granted the dignity of being an authentic verbal zealot – merely "a common type" of such.

11. John Hayward, *Prose Literature since 1939* (London: British Council, 1947), 38.

12. *Criterion* 16 (July 1937), 747.

13. Harding, *The Criterion: Cultural Politics and Periodical Networks in Inter-War Britain* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2002), 6.

14. See his Oct 1938 "Commentary" (5.648).

15. London: *Left Review*, 1937, unpaginated. Eliot's single-sentence response does not appear as an independent item in this volume; it will be gathered with other questionnaires and interviews in a later edition of *The Complete Prose*.

16. TSE to Hugh Gordon Porteus: "As a matter of fact I never intended to contribute at all. I thought I was merely writing a polite note to Nancy, declining to take part. The phrase only means that I was naturally sympathetic with Nancy or with any lady, as a polite way of writing, but I did not mean to express sympathy with anything political, so that the phrase as it stands in the collection has a really comic meaninglessness!" (4 Feb 1938).

17. Long before the rise of Mosley and the British Union of Fascists, Eliot had dismissed the importance of fascism and communism for British politics in 1928: "I cannot believe that enthusiasm for Russian or Italian 'revolution' has any intellectual value here" (3.548).

18. On 8 Jan 1923, Eliot wrote to the *Daily Mail*, commending their "remarkable series of articles which you have been publishing on Fascismo" (*L2* 7). On 28 Feb 1927, in an unpublished letter to the Author's Syndicate, Eliot rejected an article on fascism submitted for *The Criterion* because it was not "literary" enough (http://tseliot.com/letters/lv13_137). And by 1928, he began his critiques of both fascism and communism in his *Criterion* review "The Literature of Fascism" (3.540) and its continuation the next year, "Mr. Barnes and Mr. Rowse" (3.657).

19. In *The Idea of a Christian Society*, Eliot simultaneously addresses and sidesteps the problem of fascist violence from his familiar plane of abstraction: "The fundamental objection to fascist doctrine, the one which we conceal from ourselves because it might condemn ourselves as well, is that it is pagan. There are other objections too, in the political and economic sphere, but they are not objections that we can make with dignity until we set our own affairs in order. There are still other objections, to oppression and violence and cruelty, but however strongly we feel, these are objections to means and not to ends" (5.692).

20. See Pugh 60, 65.

21. Pugh 66.

22. Letter to John Hayward, 1 Nov 1939.

23. Gordon, *T. S. Eliot: An Imperfect Life* (New York: Norton, 1999), 284.

24. Ackroyd, *T. S. Eliot* (New York: Penguin, 1984), 201.

25. Letter to Hayward, 29 Nov 1939.

26. Letter to Hayward, 20 Sept 1939.

27. Letter to Aiken, 29 Sept. 1939.

EDITORIAL PROCEDURES AND PRINCIPLES

I. PUBLISHED PROSE

Criteria for Inclusion

Eliot's uncollected prose makes up the vast majority of the writings published in his lifetime and spans the period from his stories in the *Smith Academy Record* in 1905 to his final autobiographical note for the *Harvard College Class of 1910: Fifty-fifth Anniversary Report*, contributed in late December 1964, shortly before his death on 4 January 1965. These writings include hundreds of reviews and essays contributed to periodicals; commentaries in the *Criterion*; letters to the press (printed here and in the *Letters*; in each place they appear in different contexts of personal letters and public prose, thereby inviting separate readings and annotation); lectures and addresses published separately in wrappers or in boards; introductions, prefaces, and forewords to books and to translations of his works in foreign languages; testimonials and other contributions to domestic and foreign newspapers; and public broadcasts published or excerpted in the *Listener*. Beginning with volume 5, the increasing numbers of published items unrecorded in the Gallup bibliography are identified in the Contents with a diamond (♦).

Among his own letters to the press are those of which he was a signatory with one or more others. His role in the authorship is often uncertain, but his growing support of public appeals, causes, and concerns is of permanent interest. Such signed letters, which appear in increasing numbers with volume 5, are collected and chronologically included in part 2, "Signed Letters and Documents with Multiple Authorship."

By the mid-1930s, Eliot began to receive numerous invitations to give Prize Day speeches to secondary schools and addresses to and in support of various societies, charities, and churches. He often gave the only copy of his typescript to his hosts, who published or summarized the texts in their school magazines, newsletters, or local newspapers, most of which remained bibliographically unrecorded. Some of these typescripts and printed texts have been recovered; other typescripts have been lost, or the addresses were made from notes and outlines afterward discarded. But, in many instances, a staff member, or a reporter from a local paper, was present to write a report, often with substantial quotations, at times seemingly with Eliot's text in hand. These

firsthand reports of addresses and lectures have been included as valuable records of Eliot's little-known secondary intellectual life in his cultural domain.

Chronology

With a few exceptions, the editors have arranged the majority of Eliot's unpublished and published prose writings in the original order of composition or publication to allow the reader to follow closely his developing patterns of thought as he immersed himself in intellectual journalism and literary criticism from year to year, decade to decade. The primary volumes of collected essays, together with their prefaces and introductions, have been disassembled and their contents returned to chronological order alongside the uncollected and unpublished prose.

Less than 10 percent of Eliot's prose writings underwent textual changes when they were reprinted or collected; most pieces were never revisited after their first publication in periodical and other forms. Some reviews and essays, however, particularly those included in *The Sacred Wood*, were combined and revised by Eliot as new essays: successively published reviews of books on Ben Jonson in November 1919, on Philip Massinger in May-June 1920, and on Swinburne and others in the two-part "The Perfect Critic" in July 1920. The original reviews were redacted as such and included in the volume under the first title of each pair. He collapsed three other reviews published between September and December 1919 under the title "Imperfect Critics" for the volume. Moreover, "Eeldrop and Appleplex" and "Tradition and the Individual Talent," originally published in two separate parts months apart, have been combined into a single piece. In such uncharacteristic cases, we have sacrificed adherence to chronology in order to present the complete texts, but not without indicating the separate chronological positions and titles and recording significant textual changes.

A few other considerations have led us to relax the chronological order of publication in specific instances, including Eliot's doctoral dissertation on F. H. Bradley, a draft of which was completed and approved in 1916 but not edited and published until 1964. The editors have placed this lengthy work neither intrusively into the published reviews of 1916, nor awkwardly out of context in 1964, but logically at the end of the graduate essays of 1913-15, essays that led to and were organically drawn upon for the dissertation. In presenting a corrected, re-edited, and more

readable critical text in that position, the editors have drawn upon the original dissertation typescript, the proofs and correspondence of the suppressed first printing (1963), and the proofs and text of the 1964 edition.

The three volumes of university lectures – *The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism*, *After Strange Gods, The Idea of a Christian Society* – as well as *Notes towards the Definition of Culture*, have been kept intact and edited as the coherent, self-contained works that they were intended to be; however, when individual lectures were published separately, the publication data and any alterations are recorded in the textual notes. The Clark Lectures (1926) and Turnbull Lectures (1933), edited and published together posthumously as *The Varieties of Metaphysical Poetry* (1993), have also been kept intact, each re-edited and included separately and chronologically in respective volumes. The dates of composition of individual reviews, essays, and lectures are given when they are known.

In volume 4 (1930-1933), the chronology has been altered to present together the majority of his lectures in America as the Charles Eliot Norton professor at Harvard during the 1932-33 academic year. These include his Norton and Turnbull lectures and individual lectures written for delivery at numerous American institutions, together with the editorial reconstruction of five lectures destroyed before his return to England in June 1933. The unit is preceded by a separate "Chronology of Lectures and Readings." Those lectures that were not published until later in 1933 have been arranged by date of delivery, with subsequent publication information given in the notes. Eliot's Page-Barbour lectures, however, delivered at the University of Virginia in May 1933 but substantially revised before publication as *After Strange Gods* in 1934, appear in accordance with their publication date in volume 5 (1934-1939).

Standardization of Formats

Eliot's prose in little magazines and periodicals appears under a variety of house styles: the divergent formats, typography, spacing, and indents for paragraphs and set-off quotations have all been standardized. As the bibliographical descriptions and kinds of information provided for books under review also varied considerably from periodical to periodical, these descriptions have been standardized in the heading, as have the descriptions and dates of the periodicals in which the reviews first appeared. Unsigned reviews and essays are indicated as such in the heading or in an initial note;

all opening and closing signatures – signed or initialed – and pseudonyms are placed at the right margin at the end of the text.

Titles

Before 1919, many of Eliot's reviews were untitled; thereafter, most were titled unless they appeared as part of a "Commentary" in the *Criterion*. Since many reviews were given their titles by the editors of the periodicals in which they appeared, and since Eliot and his editors occasionally changed the titles of those essays that he chose to collect in book form, the editors have provided Eliot's final title ("Hamlet"), with the first and American titles ("Hamlet and his Problems") given in the notes. Titles of reviews, and titles under which Eliot's letters to editors of periodicals and newspapers appeared, were presumably supplied by his editors but are retained for ease of recognition.

Prose Transcription Errors

Under pressure to meet deadlines, Eliot frequently made transcription errors when quoting passages of prose from other authors. His editors were often inattentive to these matters, and frequently did not arrange for him to read proof. Thus, the editors of the present edition have silently restored dropped words, supplied missing ellipses, added overlooked italics and quotation marks, and placed capitals made from lowercase letters in brackets. More substantial alterations are indicated in the textual notes. Eliot often provided selected page numbers for prose quotations in parentheses in the texts; when he did not do so, the editors have supplied missing numbers in brackets in the texts and in parentheses in the notes.

Misquotations of Poetry

When minor transcription errors occur in lines or passages of poetry quoted directly from a volume under review, they are silently corrected. However, some of Eliot's misquotations are more slips of memory than mistranscriptions. Such misquotations are preserved in the text and corrected in the notes. In some instances, the misquotations affect the commentary, and in every instance, it is of interest to observe how Eliot held certain passages of poetry, especially from Dante and Shakespeare, in memory and summoned them spontaneously for unchecked use. Frank Kermode, editor of Eliot's *Selected Prose* (London: Faber & Faber, 1975), took pains to point out such misquotations in Eliot's essays, "not from

pedantry, but from a conviction that in the poet Eliot misquotation is sometimes creative" (307).

American / English Punctuation Practice

From 1909 through the preface to the second edition (1928) of *The Sacred Wood*, all of Eliot's prose was printed in what is now called American punctuation style, with double inverted commas for quotations, punctuation inside quotation marks. English periodicals such as the *Egoist*, the *Athenaeum*, the *Nation*, the *New Statesmen*, the *Bookman*, the *Spectator*, *TLS*, and others that printed Eliot's work used this common style. From the publication of *For Lancelot Andrewes* in 1928, however, all of the Faber editions of his collected essays were printed in English punctuation style, with single inverted commas, punctuation outside (inconsistently so). In editing *The Criterion*, Eliot followed the American style from 1922 to 1926, when it shifted to English style, with punctuation inconsistently inside and outside quotations. Many English periodicals, particularly those published jointly in America, continued to use the American style, and Eliot continued to publish unreprinted essays in American periodicals. Moreover, the American editions of his work systematically converted the Faber editions to American style. In an attempt to achieve uniformity and minimize error, the editors of this edition, in consultation with the publishers, and the Eliot Estate, follow the American style throughout. The earlier Faber policy of italicizing all set-off quotations in Eliot's texts has not been followed.

Translations

A number of Eliot's essays and prefaces were commissioned by a foreign audience, translated, and published only in foreign translation. The translation and the English original are both included when possible. If the original English text has not been recovered, an English translation is provided. When an English text first published in translation was revised before publication in English, the substantive alterations are noted.

Annotations

Eliot's works were translated into thirty-eight languages in his lifetime, and his writings continue to attract a worldwide readership. In annotating this edition, the editors aim to serve scholars, students, and modern readers who come to Eliot's prose from numerous languages, backgrounds, and fields of interest – not only in literary criticism but in economics, education,

philosophy, politics, theology, cultural theory, popular culture, and other disciplines. Eliot was reluctant to collect much of his prose because he felt that many of his remarks, originally composed under the pressure of deadlines, would need qualification, clarification, and correction. We have attempted to create notes that will enhance and clarify his highly referential prose, and have been mindful of both the immediate and the larger intellectual context of his writings: we draw upon his correspondence and manuscripts; where no source is given, it may be assumed that the original letter, manuscript, or carbon copy is in the collection of the Eliot Estate or at the Faber and Faber archive. When it is helpful, we make cross-references to earlier and later comments. We have attempted to identify every specific literary and nonliterary allusion; to trace all references to newspapers, periodicals, and other documents; and to identify the books and editions that he employed. As part of our larger aim to illuminate the breadth of Eliot's learning and the depths of recall that inform and enrich the texture of his critical prose, we have noted relevant inscriptions and markings in his personal copies. Eliot's own notes are indicated with an asterisk (*) after the superscript number; notes that include textual variants are indicated with a dagger (†) after the superscript.

II. UNPUBLISHED PROSE

Much of Eliot's prose was written not for publication but for reading or broadcasting to specific audiences on particular occasions: philosophical essays for postgraduate seminars, tutorials, and philosophical societies at Harvard, Oxford, and Cambridge; addresses as president of the Alliance française, London Library, Virgil Society, Books Across the Sea, Académie septentrionale, and other organizations; responses as recipient of honorary degrees, medals, and other honors; remarks at the opening of exhibitions and conferences; and appeals in aid of civic and charitable causes. Eliot chose to put these items aside as ephemeral materials in the life of a man of letters. Because of the scholarly interest and biographical richness that they contain, they are included, with thanks to Mrs. Eliot, in this edition. More than one hundred unpublished items, all of which are identified as such, are incorporated chronologically into the individual volumes of *The Complete Prose*. The first is an undergraduate essay, "The Defects of Kipling," written at Harvard in March 1909, and the last a telegram, "Tribute to John F. Kennedy," read by Jacqueline Kennedy at the groundbreaking ceremony for the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C., on 25 November 1964.

The early philosophical essays exist in pencil or ink manuscripts and in typescripts with holograph emendations. After Eliot left graduate school, he composed nearly all of his work on a typewriter, with frequent typeovers (xxxxx) and holograph corrections and insertions. On some occasions, his first wife, Vivien, or a secretary, typed his drafts. The BBC usually retyped his broadcast scripts, which often contain last-minute emendations. In editing the large variety of Eliot's unpublished writings, we attempt to present texts that are as accurate, clear, and readable as possible, with a minimum of emendation. To distinguish them from published writings, the editors have preserved some of the physical characteristics of the manuscripts (such as underlinings), choosing not to regularize them as published items lest they lose all the visual character of their composition. Previously unpublished texts are identified in the Contents with an asterisk (*) and are introduced in the volume by headnotes that provide the occasion, date, place, and context of their preparation and presentation. The location and physical description of the manuscripts are given in the textual notes, together with editorial notation of substantial alterations and deletions made by Eliot himself. When no source is given, it may be assumed that the original or carbon is in the collection of the Eliot Estate or in the Faber and Faber archive.

Eliot's unpublished texts are edited according to the following additional principles:

False starts and insignificant deletions are excised, but ~~strikeouts~~, when illuminating or clarifying, are retained or given in notes.

Typed or holograph underlinings for emphasis have been retained; occasional red ribbon color changes, an alternate method of emphasizing words and phrases, are represented in bold; underlined titles and foreign words are italicized; unpunctuated or mispunctuated titles of books, plays, and poems are corrected and standardized.

Abbreviated titles, names, and places are expanded, as are ampersands, but his occasional use of cf., i.e., e.g., sc., passim, etc., have been retained, unitalicized.

Obvious typographical errors have been silently corrected; readings of illegible words are followed by a bracketed question mark [?]; most compound adjectives (seventeenth-century poetry) are hyphenated, consistent with his ordinary practice.

Eliot's variant spellings – British, American, period (to-day), alternate (behoves) – are retained; opening and/or closing inverted commas

(quotation marks) have been supplied where Eliot has overlooked them; inconsistent placement of punctuation inside and outside inverted commas is standardized; missing accents and diacriticals are supplied.

When the volume and/or page numbers for a quotation are given by Eliot in the margin or in the text, the numbers are placed in parentheses at the end of the quotation or in the notes; when editorially supplied, they are placed in brackets.

Clearly superfluous or unintended punctuation (commas before parentheses), and some unintended double punctuation (;–) have been deleted or corrected. Where the omission of punctuation causes confusion, it has been supplied; when, in Eliot's hand, the use of a semicolon or colon is unclear, the editors have interpreted the punctuation in terms of clarity and grammatical structure.

Eliot's substantive marginal comments related to the text but not part of the body of the text are quoted and noted where they occur. When Eliot makes marginal statements with lines drawn for insertion in the text during the process of composition, they are identified in the notes. When it is clear that Eliot has made insertions from the margin or an appended page *after* the body of the text was drafted or completed, as in his essay on "A Neglected Aspect of Chapman" in volume 2, they are introduced into the text with a bracketed and italicized phrase, [*insertion*:] or [*appended insertion*:], with the end of the insertion similarly indicated [*end insertion*]. His occasional notes and outlines on the verso of a page are recorded in the textual notes.

III. FUTURE EDITIONS

The contents of this edition, which are presented in eight separate volumes, are enhanced by the inclusion of more than two hundred published items that are not recorded in the Gallup bibliography. As extensive as our collection efforts have been, we are confident that fugitive items will be found, and we encourage readers to submit them for inclusion in the edition, which is managed and maintained by Johns Hopkins University Press. A future digital platform will ensure that *The Complete Prose of T. S. Eliot* is a living edition, with the capacity to include newly discovered prose items, to correct errors, and to provide more illustrations and digital innovations for readers than would be possible in a print edition. To place Eliot's

primary prose before scholars and readers expeditiously, the editors include only those writings in this first edition. Eventually, however, a wide range of secondary prose materials will be available, including (1) additional juvenilia; (2) "Foreign Exchanges," Eliot's monthly articles for *Lloyds Bank Monthly*, 1923-25; (3) unpublished personal notes and notes from student classes; (4) interviews; (5) unpublished book reports for Faber and Faber; (6) blurbs and endorsements; (7) outlines of informal talks; and (8) Eliot's translations of works by other authors, primarily for publication in the *Criterion.* As additional resources become accessible, we envision a website that contains both an increasingly comprehensive and accurate critical edition and an invaluable repository of prose materials for researchers and readers in a new digital age of Eliot studies.

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ABBREVIATIONS

PUBLISHED WORKS BY T. S. ELIOT

ASG	*After Strange Gods: A Primer of Modern Heresy* (London: Faber & Faber, 1934).
CPP	*The Complete Poems and Plays of T. S. Eliot* (London: Faber & Faber, 1969).
EAM	*Essays Ancient and Modern* (London: Faber & Faber, 1936).
EE	*Elizabethan Essays* (London: Faber & Faber, 1934).
FLA	*For Lancelot Andrewes: Essays on Style and Order* (London: Faber & Gwyer, 1928).
HJD	*Homage to John Dryden: Three Essays on Poetry of the Seventeenth Century* (London: The Hogarth Press, 1924).
ICS	*The Idea of a Christian Society* (London: Faber & Faber, 1939).
IMH	*Inventions of the March Hare: Poems 1909-1917*, ed. Christopher Ricks (London: Faber & Faber, 1996).
KE	*Knowledge and Experience in the Philosophy of F. H. Bradley* (London: Faber & Faber, 1964).
L1	*The Letters of T. S. Eliot*, Vol. 1: 1898-1922, revised edn., ed. Valerie Eliot and Hugh Haughton (London: Faber & Faber, 2009).
L2	*The Letters of T. S. Eliot*, Vol. 2: 1923-1925, ed. Valerie Eliot and Hugh Haughton (London: Faber & Faber, 2009).
L3	*The Letters of T. S. Eliot*, Vol. 3: 1926-1927, ed. Valerie Eliot and John Haffenden (London: Faber & Faber, 2012).
L4	*The Letters of T. S. Eliot*, Vol. 4: 1928-1929, ed. Valerie Eliot and John Haffenden (London: Faber & Faber, 2013).
L5	*The Letters of T. S. Eliot*, Vol. 5: 1930-1931, ed. Valerie Eliot and John Haffenden (London: Faber & Faber, 2014).
L6	*The Letters of T. S. Eliot*, Vol. 6: 1932-1933, ed. Valerie Eliot and John Haffenden (London: Faber & Faber, 2016).
L7	*The Letters of T. S. Eliot*, Vol. 7: 1934-1935, ed. Valerie Eliot and John Haffenden (London: Faber & Faber, 2017).

NTDC	*Notes towards the Definition of Culture* (London: Faber & Faber, 1948).
OPP	*On Poetry and Poets* (London: Faber & Faber, 1957).
Poems1	*The Poems of T. S. Eliot*, Vol. 1, ed. Christopher Ricks and Jim McCue (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press; London: Faber & Faber, 2015).
Poems2	*The Poems of T. S. Eliot*, Vol. 2, ed. Christopher Ricks and Jim McCue (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press; London: Faber & Faber, 2015).
SE	*Selected Essays*, 3rd edn. (London: Faber & Faber, 1951).
SW	*The Sacred Wood: Essays on Poetry and Criticism* (London: Methuen, 1920).
TCC	*To Criticize the Critic* (London: Faber & Faber, 1965).
TWL	*The Waste Land*, as printed in *The Complete Poems and Plays of T. S. Eliot* (London: Faber & Faber, 1969).
UPUC	*The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism*, 2nd edn. (London: Faber & Faber, 1964).
VMP	*The Varieties of Metaphysical Poetry*, ed. Ronald Schuchard (London: Faber & Faber, 1993; New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1994).
WLF	*The Waste Land: A Facsimile and Transcript of the Original Drafts*, ed. Valerie Eliot (London: Faber & Faber, 1971; New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1971).

PERIODICALS

N&A	*The Nation and the Athenaeum*
NEW	*The New English Weekly*
NRF	*La Nouvelle Revue française*
NS	*The New Statesman*
TLS	*The Times Literary Supplement*

OTHER WORKS

Contemporary Reviews	*T. S. Eliot: The Contemporary Reviews*, ed. Jewel Spears Brooker (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2004).
DC1	*The Inferno of Dante*, Temple Classics edition, trans. John Aitken Carlyle (London: J. M. Dent, 1909).
DC2	*The Purgatorio of Dante*, Temple Classics edition, trans. Thomas Okey (London: J. M. Dent, 1910).

DC3	*The Paradiso of Dante*, Temple Classics edition, trans. Philip H. Wicksteed (London: J. M. Dent, 1910).
Gallup	Donald Gallup, *T. S. Eliot: A Bibliography*, revised & extended edition (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1969).
KJV	King James Version of the Bible
Lives	Samuel Johnson, *Lives of the Most Eminent English Poets*, Chandos Classics, new edition (London: Frederick Warne, 1872).
MLP	*Metaphysical Lyrics and Poems of the Seventeenth Century: Donne to Butler*, ed. Herbert J. C. Grierson (Oxford: Clarendon, 1921).
ODNB	*Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison. 60 vols. (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2004).
OED	*The Oxford English Dictionary*, ed. John Simpson and Edmund Weiner. 20 vols. (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1989).

ARCHIVAL COLLECTIONS

Beinecke	The Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University
Berg	Henry W. and Albert A. Berg Collection of English and American Literature, New York Public Library
Harvard	University Archives, Harvard University
Houghton	The Houghton Library, Harvard University
King's	Modern Archive Center, King's College, Cambridge
Ransom	Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas at Austin

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ILLUSTRATIONS

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1. Dust jacket for After Strange Gods*, 1934*

2. Dust jacket for Elizabethan Essays*, 1934*

3. Contents of Elizabethan Essays

4. Studio portrait of Eliot, 1935

5. Dust jacket for Essays Ancient and Modern*, 1936*

6. Contents of Essays Ancient and Modern*, 1936*

7. Bust of Eliot, 1936

8. The Rev. E. L. Henderson and Eliot, Salisbury Cathedral, 1938

9. Eliot delivering the Speech Day Address at Truro School, Cornwall, 1938

10. Paul Elmer More, 1937

11. Herbert Grierson, 1938

12. Bonamy Dobrée, 1939

13. Cover of the final issue of The Criterion*, 1939*

14. Dust jacket for The Idea of a Christian Society*, 1939*

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PART I
Essays, Reviews, Commentaries and Public Letters

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A Commentary

The Criterion: A Literary Review, 13 (Jan 1934) 270-78

I am quite willing to believe that Mr. Winston Churchill is an honester historian than Macaulay;[1] that his facts are indisputable, and his judgement of motive and character sound. His *Marlborough* may, for aught I know, deserve to the full the encomiums pronounced upon it by reviewers with no uncertain voice, the roses strewn with no niggard hand.[2] In the foregoing sentence I have endeavoured to trace a mimic miniature of the virtues of Mr. Churchill's prose style. Ours is said to be an age of specialization; and for specialized departments of thought, we find specialized kinds of second-rate prose. On this level of expression, Mr. Harold J. Laski is in one department an acknowledged master; in another, we might award the palm to Mr. F. L. Lucas;[3] but in that of popular historical exposition, Mr. Winston Churchill is not easily to be surpassed. A characteristic which all of these varieties of writing have in common is deadness; but death can assume various expressions. The historical style, as developed by Mr. Churchill and others has one quality not shared with the literary or the philosophical: it is the style of a man accustomed to public speaking – to oratory, an art largely concerned with evoking stock emotional responses. It is sometimes maintained that practice in speech is excellent preparation for writing; this may be so, but the kinds of speaking and of writing must be taken into account; and furthermore no kind of speaking is without its dangers as well as its benefits. In a style formed by oratory, we must never expect intimacy; we must never expect the author to address us as individual readers, but always as members of a mob. The mob of course may be assumed to possess every intellectual and moral virtue, as mobs addressed by orators usually do; it may even be a select mob. That addressed in the pages of *Marlborough* is a kind of Whig-Tory amalgam, men of the world of course, used to good manners and to downright plain speaking, virtuous but tolerant of the morals of Restoration times; recognizing the importance of good blood, but a little cynical about ancient pedigrees ("All this was very fine, but . . . we enter a rather shady phase," p. 33). What is more important, however, than the particular constitution of the audience addressed by Mr. Churchill, is that characteristic of his kind of writing, which consists in constantly

pitching the tone a little too high. At the end of a period we seem to observe the author pause for the invariable burst of hand-clapping. Here, for instance, is the situation of England at the beginning of Chapter IV:

> But for the storm-whipped seas which lapped the British islands, our fortunes would have followed the road upon which our neighbours had started. England had not, however, the same compulsive need for a standing army as the land Powers. She stood aloof; moving slowly and lagging behind the martial throng. In the happy nick of time her Parliament grew strong enough to curb the royal power and to control the armed forces, and she thus became the cradle, as she is still the citadel, of free institutions throughout the world.
>
> There she lay, small, weak, divided, and almost unarmed. [65]

It is obvious that Mr. Churchill is on the right side, the side of his readers: stout royalists except on such occasions as Charles I's oppression of wealthy landed gentry; and strong Parliamentarians except when too many of the rabble get in. There is one subject on which Mr. Churchill's mind is not evenly balanced, and that is Popery; but the audience, although reasonably indifferent about such matters at the present time, is always ready for an outbreak of applause when sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Popery is mentioned in the right tone.

> Since the days of Queen Elizabeth and the Spanish Armada, Spain had been the bugbear of Protestant England. Many devout families, suffering all things, still adhered to the Catholic faith. But deep in the hearts of the English people from peer to peasant memories of Smithfield burned with a fierce glow which any breeze could rouse into flame. And now Spain was in decrepitude, insolvent, incoherent, tracing her genealogies and telling her beads. [67]

(Perhaps it is over-fastidious to observe that other people besides decrepit Spaniards tell their beads, and that Mr. Churchill has devoted some pages to his own genealogy; but it is in his own defence that I point out that the term "peasant" in this context is not used invidiously, but only for the sake of alliteration: I should hardly expect him to address an audience of British agricultural labourers as "peasants" – a rank, indeed, which some of them might envy.) I am not concerned, however, with the truth of Mr. Churchill's observations; but with the unreality with which his language invests them. To the ordinary man of letters, who is no historian, there is nothing better

written or more moving in the book than the letters exchanged between John and Sarah.[4] We are, for a moment, among real human beings, not mere public figures. And after these letters, from which the descendant of the writers might have learned something about writing, what has Mr. Churchill to say? He spoils it all by another appeal to the crowd:

> The facts could not be disputed. They proclaim the glory of that wedlock in which the vast majority of civilized mankind find happiness and salvation in a precarious world. [130]

It is only fair to Mr. Churchill to add, that while his historical style possesses beauties that the charm of no other personality than his could give, it is not unique. Here is a paragraph from another modern historian, a champion of Nationalism:

> Such was the state of things in France when the *émigrés* first began to conspire with feudal Europe against their own countrymen. By our modern ways of thinking, their conduct in calling in the foreigner stands heavily condemned. (*Mr. Churchill, with reminiscences of Archangel, might dissent*). But they had been bred up in a world almost without patriotic tradition, which regarded a Church and an Order as units commanding allegiance more strongly than a nation. Indeed, their "nation" was the *noblesse* of Europe, not the French peasants and bourgeoisie. (*The author thus commits himself to opposition to international communism*). The horror that their conduct caused in France, surprised them, for it was, in fact, something new. France, in becoming democratic, had doubled her sense of nationhood. The peasant had become not indeed a Jacobin, but a patriot, ready to shed his blood for "*la belle France*" who had given him his field and freedom. These traitors would bring the Teuton into our plains to rivet our chains once more! Let their blood stain our furrows! The terrible words of the Marseillaise glow with the blended passions of that furnace out of which modern France emerged.

The last sentence pronounces the author to be an historian of the same (literary) school as Mr. Churchill: the quotation is from a *British History in the Nineteenth Century*, by Sir George Macaulay Trevelyan.[5]

I suspect that the interest in Communist Russia is at the moment on the decline, and that the flood of books on the subject is for the moment exhausted. While one always welcomes a diversion from any over-exploited

subject of publicity, there may be no reason to congratulate ourselves on having something else to think about. Communism is at least a respectable political theory, with its own standards of orthodoxy, in the eyes of those who agree with Joseph de Maistre that *toutes les institutions imaginables reposent sur une idée religieuse, ou ne font que passer*.[6] It appears to recognize a primacy of intellect, rather than of hysteria; and in times like ours we need ideas, not only our own, but antagonistic ideas against which our own may keep themselves sharp: it is when ideas are absent, or when their force is exhausted, that the irresponsible political adventurer has his opportunity. Mr. John Macmurray is one of our leading *philosophes* of communism, but of his recent book, *The Philosophy of Communism*, I will not speak, as it is to be reviewed in our next number.[7] I have also read Mr. H. G. Wood's *Truth and Error of Communism* and Mr. A. J. Penty's *Communism and the Alternative*, both published by the Student Christian Movement Press, which is to be commended for its enterprise.[8] Mr. Wood's book, after some praises bestowed upon it in the press, I found just not quite good enough. It is not because he takes Mr. Middleton Murry seriously as the exponent of a kind of communism; nor is it because the fundamental religious heresies of communism have already been better exposed by Berdyaev and Waldemar Gurian;[9] it is because the communism which he attacks is a definite thing, and the Christianity which he maintains is a rather vaporous entity. He tells us that "three Christian principles are essential to the building up of the new order in politics and industry": what are they? The first is the "recognition that all have sinned" [143]. Now as Mr. Wood puts it, I cannot feel that this amounts to very much more than, let us say, the admission that there were selfish, short-sighted, narrow and unscrupulous interests at work in framing the Treaty of Versailles. But to recognize such facts does not illustrate any particularly Christian principle, or anything more Christian than common sense.

The first Christian principle involved is not that "all have sinned" – how easy and inexpensive that is to admit! – but that we are all sinners: which, with all due respect, is a very different and very much deeper truth, and one very much harder to grasp. And Mr. Wood's second Christian principle is what he calls "constructive citizenship" [144], by which, so far as I can gather, he means that we must move cautiously, be careful in plucking tares for fear we pull up good wheat, and proceed according to the best prudential precepts. And his third Christian principle is that "nothing can rightly be done without mutual respect" [145] – which means, I think, the "spirit of community."

Now these principles are all very well, but they suffer from the fact that everyone can accept them: there is nothing specifically Christian about them. I cannot help thinking that Mr. Wood has taken more pains to inform himself about communism than he has about Christianity, even though the plurality of his references be only to Mr. Middleton Murry and Mr. Maurice Dobb.[10] You cannot arrive at a Christian social philosophy, any more than you can arrive at a communist one, merely by looking into your heart and writing.[11] You need a knowledge of the whole history of Christianity up to the Reformation, and in particular some acquaintance, for instance, with the views of Aquinas, to whom Mr. Wood does not once refer. And with this equipment, there are two paths which may be followed. You may confine yourself to investigating and defining those social theories and practices which the Christian may not accept, or you may elaborate a theory which aims to be consonant with Christianity, though it may not be in every respect logically derivable from those beliefs which are essential to faith and morals. The orthodox Christian is likely to have certain predispositions in the temporal sphere, modified according to time, place and circumstance: it is not insignificant that the meanings of the term "Liberalism" in theology and in politics are not, historically, to be kept wholly distinct. The danger of the former kind of theory is that it may be so negative as to be no guide at all; the danger of the latter kind is that it may implicate the universal with the individual, the eternal with the transient: the theorist must be careful to keep matters distinct. Examples of the latter kind may be found in the work of such writers as de Maistre and Bonald; of its abuse, in the condemnation (rightly or wrongly) of the *Action Française*, in 1927.[12] But Mr. Wood can be included in neither category; his Christian theory is no theory at all; and his book is hardly likely to serve any useful purpose.

Mr. Penty's book shows much more precision. He does not, perhaps, add very much to the analysis of bolshevism which other Christian critics have already given; but readers who are not familiar with other books on the subject will find the Christian objections very clearly set forth. One might admit also that his book falls into two parts. One is the summary of the Christian argument against communism, the other the presentation of Mr. Penty's own views. It is no disrespect to the latter to say that they have already been fully expounded in his *Means and Ends* and other volumes, for they are worth repeating.[13] Whether Mr. Penty, or Major Douglas is right in their difference about the role of the machine is a minor question:[14]

Mr. Penty asserts a principle more important than that. The principle involved is that we should enquire what is *right* before we enquire what is *inevitable*. Nor is the question what form of society is a *possible* alternative to communism, but what form is *worthy* to be an alternative; for any form which engages support simply from fear of communism is doomed. And in the following paragraph Mr. Penty has supplied something which Mr. Wood has failed to give:

> The first requisite of such a theory is that it shall be based upon the principles of Christianity, not in the sentimental sense in which any proposal which professes to be for the good of mankind asks for the support of the churches, but in the sense that it is the civil equivalent of Christian theology; the logical implication of its teaching. Christianity, because it takes its stand on the spiritual nature of man, is the only principle capable of challenging the root assumptions of materialist Communism. The strength of Communism finally rests on the fact that the Communist is a man of principle, persuaded of the absolute truth of the materialist philosophy and conception of history. He takes his stand upon it without equivocation, and this gives him a driving force against which the ordinary secular reformer, who because of his denial of Christianity has nothing to appeal to but common sense and expediency, fights in vain. In consequence it will not be until those who are opposed to Communism take their stand as unequivocally upon the principles of Christianity as Communists do upon those of materialism that a force will be set in motion capable of successfully challenging it and restoring the lost equilibrium between the spiritual and material sides of life.[15]

I have suggested that the Christian social philosopher may legitimately, so long as he is careful to distinguish between that which is essential and that which is merely desirable, make use of associated ideas: there is political inspiration, not only in such writers as de Maistre, but in such as Coleridge or Newman. But the Christian social philosopher of our time can only follow such a course safely if he is equally prepared for a *dis*-sociation of ideas. He must be able to consider the ideas of class, of property, of nationality not according to current or local prejudices, but according to permanent principles. The Reverend V. A. Demant's *God, Man, and Society* (also published by the Student Christian Movement Press) possesses, among other excellences, this merit of contributing to the dissociation of

ideas. With Sir George Trevelyan's observations on the French Revolution in mind, it is well that we should be told that

> [T]o place the redemptive work of the Christian Faith in social affairs in its proper setting, it is necessary to have clearly in mind at the outset that the consciousness of "the nation" as *the* social unit is a very recent and contingent experience. It belongs to a limited historical period and is bound up with certain specific happenings, theories of society and attitudes to life as a whole. It is therefore not an inevitable or essential aspect of men's social consciousness. [144]

Mr. Demant is here in accord with Mr. Christopher Dawson, to whom he refers us in the footnote.[16] And here he touches what is perhaps the chief malady of the modern liberal state – a malady which, however, may not be so fatal as some of the nostrums offered for its cure:

> The modern state if it acts for the sake of all its citizens finds it therefore more and more difficult to further directly the fulfilment of what one or other section of its citizens consider to be "the good life," in so far as citizens differ in their notions of "the good life" or have none at all. It is simply a fact that the modern state includes people of all religions and none, and with ethical assumptions of varying quality and intensity. [91]

But Mr. Demant's book is too important to serve merely as one of the texts for a single Commentary; and I am likely to refer to it again.

While our October number was in press, and too late for mention in the Commentary of that issue, we learned with great regret of the death of Arnaud Dandieu, who in collaboration with Robert Aron had contributed the article "Back to Flesh and Blood" to *The Criterion* a year ago. M. Dandieu, who was only thirty-five at the time of his death, had attracted attention with his first book, *Marcel Proust*, which was published by the Oxford Press as well as in Paris. Of three books written in collaboration with M. Aron, the first, *Décadence de la nation française*, was the subject of some observations in this Commentary; the second, *Le cancer américain*, I have not seen; the third, *La révolution nécessaire*, has I believe been published recently by Grasset. With M. Aron, M. Dandieu was engaged also in editing a quarterly review, *L'ordre nouveau*.[17]

I regret having had no personal acquaintance with M. Dandieu, of whose personal charm and conversational powers I had heard much. The

direction and the quality of his thinking struck me as a most promising symptom among the younger generation in Paris; and his death is a loss to *The Criterion* as well as to the intellectual life of Paris.

T.S.E.

NOTES

1. TSE wrote of Macaulay's historical prose style in "Contemporary English Prose" (1923): "the style of Macaulay is an eighteenth century style debased by journalistic exuberance and theatrical emotion . . . the remains of a fine style in the hands of a literary demagogue" (2.448). Churchill frequently weighs his narrative accounts against those of the anti-Marlborough Macaulay in his *History of England since the Accession of James the Second* (1848).

2. TSE here reviews the first of Churchill's four-volume *Marlborough: His Life and Times* (London: G. G. Harrap, 1933-38), a biography of his distant aristocratic ancestor Sir John Churchill, Duke of Marlborough (1650-1772).

3. In his review of Laski's *Introduction to Politics* in his *Criterion* "Commentary" for Oct 1931, TSE is highly critical of Laski's prose style, the obscurity of which makes his account of politics "as useful as a catalogue of spare parts for a motor car which is no longer manufactured" (4.356). In his second review of Lucas's edition of John Webster, he criticizes Lucas's style in portraying the Renaissance as overly "fanciful," "too highly coloured by Elizabethan drama . . . his criticism of Webster is coloured by an imaginative and partial impression of what the Renaissance must have been like. And these impressions are stamped upon the sensitive and poetic, but decidedly modern mind of Mr. Lucas" (3.427).

4. John's wife, Sarah Jennings Churchill, Duchess of Marlborough (1660-1744). Of thirty-seven surviving letters, all but eight are John's during the period of courtship and engagement leading to marriage (1675 to 1677). They reveal Sarah's command over John's devotion to her: "Her contributions," writes Churchill, "are short, severe, and almost repellent. She must have written many more letters . . . in a more tender vein. She seems, however, only to have kept copies of her warlike missives. . . . The reader shall be the judge of the correspondence" (109).

5. London: Longmans, Green, 1922, 77; TSE's parenthetical insertions. G. M. Trevelyan (1876-1962), patriotic historian of England, was best known for his trilogy, *England under Queen Anne* (1930-34), which took up the national story where Macaulay's *History of England from the Accession of James the Second* left off.

6. From *Considérations sur la France* (1797), the right-wing opposition to the French revolution by Joseph de Maistre (1753-1821). *Trans*: "Either every imaginable institution is founded on a religious concept or it is only a passing phenomenon"; trans. Richard A. Lebrun, *Considerations on France* (Montreal and London: McGill-Queen's UP, 1974), 80.

7. V. A. Demant's review of the volume (Faber, 1933) by John Macmurray (1891-1976), then Grote Professor of Mind and Logic at University College, London, was delayed until the issue of July 1934 (686-89). Demant observes critically that Macmurray "rests the whole revolutionary nature of Communism upon [the] doctrine of the unity of theory and practice" (687).

8. Appearing in 1933, the volume was authored by H. G. (Herbert George) Wood (1879-1963), lecturer on the New Testament at the Selly Oak Colleges, Birmingham, and author of *Why Mr. Bertrand Russell Is Not a Christian* (1928); the volume by Distributist leader A. J. Penty, a

frequent contributor to the *Criterion*, also appeared in 1933. The Press of the Student Christian Movement, formed in 1929 and edited by Hugh Martin until 1950, rapidly grew in the 1930s to become one of the leading publishing houses for serious theological-political studies.

9. Nikolai Berdyaev (1874-1948) was a philosopher of religion and politics who suffered under both the Tsarist and Bolshevist regimes. He had authored *The Russian Revolution* (1931), which was reviewed in the *Criterion* of Apr 1932 (532-36) by Frank McEachern. "The belief in the collective whole and its welfare," writes McEachran, "is in fact the driving emotional force behind Communism; and however much we deplore its perversion of Christian principles, we cannot ignore its sincerity. . . . It is, as Berdyaev is not slow to point out, a lasting reminder of a duty unfulfilled, the social duty to the under-dog which the Christian Church and capitalistic society have not been quick enough, or are not yet skillful enough, to perform" (536).

The Russian-born, German-American political scientist and theorist of totalitarianism Waldemar Gurian (1902-54) had recently published his *Bolshevism: Theory and Practice* (1932), reviewed in the *Criterion* of Jan 1933 (285-87) by A. J. Penty, who allows that the history of the Revolution, "its phases, the social and economic policy of the Bolsheviks, the G.P.U., and the Bolshevik Party and its leaders are all faithfully dealt with. Yet I cannot but feel that Gurian's presentation is a little out of perspective, because he does not appear to appreciate the dependence of Bolshevism on the Industrial Revolution. On the contrary, he sees it entirely as a product of materialist philosophy" (286).

10. Wood consistently confronts the views of Middleton Murry's *The Necessity of Communism* (1932) and Maurice Dobb's *On Marxism To-Day* (1932). In his *Criterion* "Commentary" for July 1932, TSE stated: "Even Mr. Maurice Dobb (whose pamphlet, *On Marxism To-Day*, is the most lucid and persuasive brief account [of economic determinism] that I have read, and is calculated to dispel some errors) does not enlighten me" (4.492).

11. TSE alludes to the last line of the first sonnet in *Astrophel and Stella* (1591): "Fool, said my Muse to me, look in thy heart and write." *The Poems of Sir Philip Sidney*, ed. John Drinkwater (London: Routledge, 1910), 65-66.

12. The politician and philosopher Louis Gabriel Ambroise de Bonald (1754-1840), author of the suppressed *Théorie du pouvoir politique et religieux* [*Theory of Political and Religious Power*] (1797), was like de Maistre a monarchist and Catholic loyalist ideologically opposed to the French Revolution. TSE alludes to the Vatican's condemnation of the Action Française in Dec 1926, which he addressed in "The *Action Française*, M. Maurras and Mr. Ward" (1928) (3.369).

13. Faber published Penty's volume in 1932 after TSE had printed a version of the title chapter, "Means and Ends," as the lead article in the *Criterion* of Oct 1931 (1-24). The book was reviewed in the *Criterion* of July 1932 (727-31) by Charles Smyth, who asserts that for Penty "the unrestricted use of machinery on a basis of rationalization increases the volume of production throughout the world while simultaneously undermining purchasing power by displacing labour" (728); he concludes that Penty "writes as a craftsman, and it is the craftsman's horror of machinery that provides the true *leitmotiv* of his book" (730).

14. Major C. H. Douglas wrote in *Social Credit* (London: Eyre & Spottiswood, 1924; rev. ed. 1933), that to achieve the moral end of universal employment for the production of goods and services "the use of labour-saving machinery should be discouraged, all scientific effort should be removed from industry . . . and, in particular, modern tools, processes and the application of solar energy in its various forms should be vigorously suppressed" (19).

15. From chapter 7 of *Communism and the Alternative*, 42.

16. From chapter 7 of Demant's volume, subtitled *An Introduction to Christian Sociology* (London: Student Christian Movement Press, 1933). In the footnote, he directs the reader to Dawson's *The Making of Europe* (1932) and his *Progress and Religion* (1931) for a treatment of "the nation" in relation to religions.

17. Arnaud Dandieu (1897-1933), a civil servant, had authored *Marcel Proust, sa révélation psychologique* (1930); at the time of his death on 6 Aug 1933, he had become a collaborator with Robert Aron (1898-1975), editor, film critic, and publisher. Their jointly authored essay, subtitled "A Political Programme," appeared in the *Criterion* of Jan 1933 (185-99); their collaboration on *Décadence de la nation française* (1931), *Le Cancer américain* (1931), and *La Révolution nécessaire* (1933) formed the philosophical-political basis of their *non-conformiste* journal, *L'Ordre nouveau* (1930-38). They and their works had been introduced to the readers of the *Criterion* by Montgomery Belgion in his "French Chronicle" for the issue of Oct 1932 (84-85): "they are anti-Maurras . . . they have sought to describe and to condemn what they regard as a great evil now besetting the world. That dealt with in *Décadence* is a certain pseudo-rationalism. In *Le Cancer* they attack the [American] mania for production and for inflated credit. *Décadence* . . . is not to be understood unless one grasps how great the influence of Auguste Comte still is in France. It has to be borne in mind that an apparently independent thinker like Maurras is mainly a Positivist. . . . What Aron and Dandieu want is . . . to see the human individual restored to the centre of things, and in their third book, *La Révolution Nécessaire*, they . . . argue that this can be brought about only through a revolution" (85). Belgion subsequently reviewed the latter volume in the *Criterion* of Apr 1934 (510-13) as "significant of a kind of activity taking place among young men on the Continent" (510).

The Blackshirts[1]

To the Editor of *The Church Times*

The Church Times, 111 (2 Feb 1934) 116

Sir, – The letter of Mr. Pierce-Butler in your issue of Jan. 26 seems to me to express an attitude towards Fascism, on the part of pious Christians, which is likely to spread, and which therefore deserves close examination.[2]

I am perfectly ready to accept Mr. Pierce-Butler's testimony gathered among the young people of his acquaintance, and I am very glad to hear it.[3] But, with all due respect, I believe that he misses the point. The point is not whether a large number of people, with or without the inspiration and example of Sir Oswald Mosley and Lord Rothermere, are both zealous Fascists and devout Christians. The human mind is capable of containing the most contradictory ideas at once, especially when in a state of emotional excitement. The point is, not what some people at the moment actually maintain, but whether the Christian and Catholic idea and the Fascist idea are, in themselves, compatible. I am not answering this question, but putting it; for it is a question which Mr. Pierce-Butler does not answer.

The most authoritative statement of Fascist principle, I suppose, should be the one statement which Signor Mussolini has made, which he contributed to the *Encyclopaedia Italiana*, and which is published by the Hogarth Press for a shilling, under the title of *The Political and Social Doctrine of Fascism*.[4] From it I extract the following propositions, which are relevant to the present inquiry:

1. "War alone brings up to its highest tension all human energy and puts the stamp of nobility upon the peoples who have the courage to meet it." [11]
2. "Absolute monarchy has been and can never return, any more than blind acceptance of ecclesiastical authority." [19](N. B. – The question here is that of the differentiation between acceptance, and *blind* acceptance, of ecclesiastical authority; and how this difference differs from the difference between acceptance and *blind* acceptance of temporal authority.)
3. "Fascism conceives of the State as an Absolute." [21][5]

4. "Peoples which are rising, or rising again after a period of decadence, are always imperialist." [25]

I am not taking upon myself to criticize these assertions; I only suggest that every Catholic who inclines to sympathize with Fascist politics should make it his business to meditate upon them. In conclusion, I should like to call attention to the excellent article by Mr. Christopher Dawson in the current issue of *Theology*.[6]

T. S. ELIOT

24, RUSSELL SQUARE, LONDON, W. C. 1.

NOTES

1. The CC is dated 30 Jan.

2. An editorial summary in the *Church Times* of 19 Jan 1934 criticized Lord Rothermere's front-page article in the *Daily Mail* of 15 Jan 1934 entitled "Hurrah for the Blackshirts!" in which he pledged his support to the Fascist movement in England. The *Church Times* editor stated that "everywhere Fascism is necessarily a danger to the Christian religion" (59). Rev. Rollo Pierce-Butler (1885-1950) wrote the following week to contest this claim, arguing that "an intimate knowledge of British Fascism, as expounded and lived by the followers of Sir Oswald Mosley, utterly disproves this very sweeping remark" (84).

3. Pierce-Butler, who was the chaplain of the branch of the British Union of Fascists to which he belonged, recounted: "A prominent young officer from Headquarters told me that he was first brought to appreciate the glory of the Catholic Faith through Fascism. . . . Day by day I am among these young enthusiasts; . . . and never once have I heard or seen a word or act of opposition to real religion . . . wherever I go among them, I find a respect and affection for my sacred calling" (84).

4. TSE's copy of Benito Mussolini's *The Political and Social Doctrine of Fascism*, trans. Jane Soames (London: Leonard and Virginia Woolf at the Hogarth Press, 1933), published as no. 18 in the series Day to Day Pamphlets, contains his marginalia. It was first printed in the July-Sept 1933 issue of *Political Quarterly*. Mussolini contributed the article in 1932 to the fourteenth volume of the *Enciclopedia italiana*.

5. Mussolini has "absolute."

6. "Civilization and the Faith," *Theology*, 28 (Feb 1934) 67-77. There Dawson writes: "There is no longer any danger of Christians attempting to force their beliefs on others at the point of the sword or of their trying to make men religious by Act of Parliament. The danger today is rather that well-meaning people are apt to reduce Christianity to the level of secular idealism by identifying it with whatever social or political cause is most popular at the moment, whether it be National Socialism in Germany or humanitarian Socialism in England" (74).

After Strange Gods: A Primer of Modern Heresy

London: Faber and Faber, 1934. Pp. 68.[1]

The Page-Barbour Lectures at the University of Virginia, 1933[2]

PREFACE

Le monde moderne avilit.[3] It also provincialises, and it can also corrupt.

The three lectures which follow were not undertaken as exercises in literary criticism. If the reader insists upon considering them as such, I should like to guard against misunderstanding as far as possible. The lectures are not designed to set forth, even in the most summary form, my opinions of the work of contemporary writers: they are concerned with certain ideas in illustration of which I have drawn upon the work of some of the few modern writers whose work I know. I am not primarily concerned either with their absolute importance or their importance relatively to each other; and other writers, who in any literary survey of our time ought to be included, are unmentioned or barely mentioned, because they do not provide such felicitous illustration of my thesis, or because they are rare exceptions to it, or because I am unacquainted with their work. I am sure that those whom I have discussed are among the best; and for my purpose the second-rate were useless. The extent to which I have criticised the authors whose names find place, is accordingly some measure of my respect for them. I dare say that a detached critic could find an equally rich vein of error in my own writings. If such error is there, I am probably the last person to be able to detect it; but its presence and discovery would not condemn what I say here, any more than its absence would confirm it.

There is no doubt some curiosity to know what any writer thinks of his contemporaries: a curiosity which has less to do with literary criticism than with literary gossip. I hope that a reader who takes up this essay in that expectation will be disappointed. I am uncertain of my ability to criticise my contemporaries as artists; I ascended the platform of these lectures only in the role of moralist.

I have not attempted to disguise, but rather have been pleased to remind the reader, that these are lectures; that they were composed for vocal

communication to a particular audience. What the Foundation requires is that the lectures shall be published, not that a book shall subsequently be written on the same subject; and a lecture composed for the platform cannot be transformed into something else. I should be glad if the reader could keep this in mind when he finds that some ideas are put forward without a full account of their history or of their activities, and that others are set down in an absolute way without qualifications. I am aware that my assertion of the obsolescence of Blasphemy might thus be subject to stricture: but if I had developed the refinements and limitations which present themselves to the mind of the Christian enquirer, I should have needed at least the space of one whole lecture; and what I was concerned to do was merely to explain that the charge of blasphemy was not one of those that I wished to prefer against modern literature. It may be said that no blasphemy can be purely verbal; and it may also be said that there is a profounder meaning of the term "blasphemy," in which some modern authors (including, possibly, myself) may possibly have been gravely guilty.

In such matters, as perhaps in everything, I must depend upon some good-will on the part of the reader. I do not wish to preach only to the converted, but primarily to those who, never having applied moral principles to literature quite explicitly – perhaps even having conscientiously believed that they ought not to apply them in this way to "works of art" – are possibly convertible. I am not arguing or reasoning, or engaging in controversy with those whose views are radically opposed to such as mine. In our time, controversy seems to me, on really fundamental matters, to be futile. It can only usefully be practised where there is common understanding. It requires common assumptions; and perhaps the assumptions that are only felt are more important than those that can be formulated. The acrimony which accompanies much debate is a symptom of differences so large that there is nothing to argue about. We experience such profound differences with some of our contemporaries, that the nearest parallel is the difference between the mentality of one epoch and another. In a society like ours, worm-eaten with Liberalism, the only thing possible for a person with strong convictions is to state a point of view and leave it at that.

I wish to express my thanks to Professor Wilbur Nelson and the Page-Barbour Lectureship Committee; to the Acting President and the members of the Faculty of the University of Virginia who helped to make my visit to Virginia a very pleasant memory; to my hosts, Professor and Mrs. Scott Buchanan; to Professor Buchanan for conversations and suggestions

out of which these lectures arose;[4] and to the Revd. M. C. D'Arcy, S.J., and Mr. F. V. Morley for their criticisms.[5] It is a pleasure to me to think that these lectures were delivered at one of the older, smaller and most gracious of American educational institutions, one of those in which some vestiges of a traditional education seem to survive. Perhaps I am mistaken: but if not, I should wish that I might be able to encourage such institutions to maintain their communications with the past, because in so doing they will be maintaining their communications with any future worth communicating with.

T.S.E.

London, January 1934.

I

Some years ago I wrote an essay entitled *Tradition and the Individual Talent*.[6] During the course of the subsequent fifteen years I have discovered, or had brought to my attention, some unsatisfactory phrasing and at least one more than doubtful analogy.[7] But I do not repudiate what I wrote in that essay any more fully than I should expect to do after such a lapse of time. The problem, naturally, does not seem to me so simple as it seemed then, nor could I treat it now as a purely literary one. What I propose to attempt in these three lectures is to outline the matter as I now conceive it.

It seemed to me appropriate to take this occasion, my first visit to Virginia, for my re-formulation. You have here, I imagine, at least some recollection of a "tradition" such as the influx of foreign populations has almost effaced in some parts of the North, and such as never established itself in the West: though it is hardly to be expected that a tradition here, any more than anywhere else, should be found in healthy and flourishing growth. I have been much interested, since the publication a few years ago of a book called *I'll Take My Stand*, in what is sometimes called the agrarian movement in the South, and I look forward to any further statements by the same group of writers.[8] May I say that my first, and no doubt superficial impressions of your country – I speak as a New Englander – have strengthened my feeling of sympathy with those authors: no one, surely, can cross the Potomac for the first time without being struck by differences so great that their extinction could only mean the death of both cultures. I had previously been led to wonder, in travelling from Boston to New York, at what point Connecticut ceases to be a New England state and is transformed into a New York suburb; but to cross into Virginia is as definite an

experience as to cross from England to Wales, almost as definite as to cross the English Channel. And the differences here, with no difference of language or race to support them, have had to survive the immense pressure towards monotony exerted by the industrial expansion of the latter part of the nineteenth and the first part of the twentieth century. The Civil War was certainly the greatest disaster in the whole of American history; it is just as certainly a disaster from which the country has never recovered, and perhaps never will: we are always too ready to assume that the good effects of wars, if any, abide permanently while the ill-effects are obliterated by time. Yet I think that the chances for the re-establishment of a native culture are perhaps better here than in New England. You are farther away from New York; you have been less industrialised and less invaded by foreign races; and you have a more opulent soil.

My local feelings were stirred very sadly by my first view of New England, on arriving from Montreal, and journeying all one day through the beautiful desolate country of Vermont.[9] Those hills had once, I suppose, been covered with primeval forest; the forest was razed to make sheep pastures for the English settlers; now the sheep are gone, and most of the descendants of the settlers; and a new forest appeared blazing with the melancholy glory of October maple and beech and birch scattered among the evergreens; and after this procession of scarlet and gold and purple wilderness you descend to the sordor of the half-dead mill towns of southern New Hampshire and Massachusetts. It is not necessarily those lands which are the most fertile or most favoured in climate that seem to me the happiest, but those in which a long struggle of adaptation between man and his environment has brought out the best qualities of both; in which the landscape has been moulded by numerous generations of one race, and in which the landscape in turn has modified the race to its own character. And those New England mountains seemed to me to give evidence of a human success so meagre and transitory as to be more desperate than the desert.[10†]

I know very well that the aim of the "neo-agrarians" in the South will be qualified as quixotic, as a hopeless stand for a cause which was lost long before they were born. It will be said that the whole current of economic determinism is against them, and economic determinism is to-day a god before whom we fall down and worship with all kinds of music. I believe that these matters may ultimately be determined by what people want; that when anything is generally accepted as desirable, economic laws can be upset in order to achieve it; that it does not so much matter at present

whether any measures put forward are practical, as whether the aim is a good aim, and the alternatives intolerable. There are, at the present stage, more serious difficulties in the revival or establishment of a tradition and a way of life, which require immediate consideration.

Tradition is not solely, or even primarily, the maintenance of certain dogmatic beliefs; these beliefs have come to take their living form in the course of the formation of a tradition. What I mean by tradition involves all those habitual actions, habits and customs, from the most significant religious rite to our conventional way of greeting a stranger, which represent the blood kinship of "the same people living in the same place." It involves a good deal which can be called *taboo*: that this word is used in our time in an exclusively derogatory sense is to me a curiosity of some significance. We become conscious of these items, or conscious of their importance, usually only after they have begun to fall into desuetude, as we are aware of the leaves of a tree when the autumn wind begins to blow them off – when they have separately ceased to be vital. Energy may be wasted at that point in a frantic endeavour to collect the leaves as they fall and gum them onto the branches: but the sound tree will put forth new leaves, and the dry tree should be put to the axe. We are always in danger, in clinging to an old tradition, or attempting to re-establish one, of confusing the vital and the unessential, the real and the sentimental. Our second danger is to associate tradition with the immovable; to think of it as something hostile to all change; to aim to return to some previous condition which we imagine as having been capable of preservation in perpetuity, instead of aiming to stimulate the life which produced that condition in its time.

It is not of advantage to us to indulge a sentimental attitude towards the past. For one thing, in even the very best living tradition there is always a mixture of good and bad, and much that deserves criticism; and for another, tradition is not a matter of feeling alone. Nor can we safely, without very critical examination, dig ourselves in stubbornly to a few dogmatic notions, for what is a healthy belief at one time may, unless it is one of the few fundamental things, be a pernicious prejudice at another. Nor should we cling to traditions as a way of asserting our superiority over less favoured peoples. What we can do is to use our minds, remembering that a tradition without intelligence is not worth having, to discover what is the best life for us not as a political abstraction, but as a particular people in a particular place; what in the past is worth preserving and what should be rejected; and what conditions, within our power to bring about, would foster the society that

we desire. Stability is obviously necessary. You are hardly likely to develop tradition except where the bulk of the population is relatively so well off where it is that it has no incentive or pressure to move about. The population should be homogeneous; where two or more cultures exist in the same place they are likely either to be fiercely self-conscious or both to become adulterate.[11*] What is still more important is unity of religious background; and reasons of race and religion combine to make any large number of free-thinking Jews undesirable.[12] There must be a proper balance between urban and rural, industrial and agricultural development. And a spirit of excessive tolerance is to be deprecated. We must also remember that – in spite of every means of transport that can be devised – the local community must always be the most permanent, and that the concept of the nation is by no means fixed and invariable.[13*] It is, so to speak, only one fluctuating circle[14†] of loyalties between the centre of the family and the local community, and the periphery of humanity entire. Its strength and its geographical size depend upon the comprehensiveness of a way of life which can harmonise parts with distinct local characters of their own. When it becomes no more than a centralised machinery it may affect some of its parts to their detriment, or to what they believe to be their detriment; and we get the regional movements which have appeared within recent years. It is only a law of nature, that local patriotism, when it represents a distinct tradition and culture, takes precedence over a more abstract national patriotism. This remark should carry more weight for being uttered by a Yankee.[15†]

So far I have only pronounced a few doctrines all of which have been developed by other writers.[16*] I do not intend to trespass upon their fields. I wished simply to indicate the connotation which the term *tradition* has for me, before proceeding to associate it with the concept of *orthodoxy*, which seems to me more fundamental (with its opposite, *heterodoxy*, for which I shall also use the term *heresy*) than the pair *classicism–romanticism* which is frequently used.

As we use the term *tradition* to include a good deal more than "traditional religious beliefs," so I am here giving the term *orthodoxy* a similar inclusiveness; and though of course I believe that a right tradition for us must be also a Christian tradition, and that orthodoxy in general implies Christian orthodoxy, I do not propose to lead the present series of lectures to a theological conclusion. The relation between tradition and orthodoxy in the past is evident enough; as is also the great difference there may be between an orthodox Christian and a member of the Tory Party. But

Conservatism, so far as it has ever existed, so far as it has ever been intelligent, and not merely one of the names for hand-to-mouth party politics, has been associated with the defence of tradition, ideally if not often in fact. On the other hand, there was certainly, a hundred years ago, a relation between the Liberalism which attacked the Church and the Liberalism which appeared in politics. According to a contemporary, William Palmer, the former group of Liberals

> were eager to eliminate from the Prayer-book the belief in the Scriptures, the Creeds, the Atonement, the worship of Christ. They called for the admission of Unitarian infidels as fellow-believers. They would eviscerate the Prayer-book, reduce the Articles to a deistic formulary, abolish all subscriptions or adhesions to formularies, and reduce religion to a state of anarchy and dissolution. These notions were widely spread. They were advocated in numberless publications, and greedily received by a democratic, thoughtless public. . . . Christianity, as it had existed for eighteen centuries, was unrepresented in this turmoil.[17*]

It is well to remember that this sort of Liberalism was flourishing a century ago; it is also well to remember that it is flourishing still. Not many months ago I read an article by an eminent liberal divine from which I have preserved the following sentence:

> We now have at hand an apparatus which, though not yet able to discover reality, is fully competent to identify and to eliminate the disproportionate mass of error which has found lodgment in our creeds and codes. The factual untruth and the fallacious inference are being steadily eliminated from the hereditary body of religious faith and moral practice.[18]

And, in order not to limit my instances to theology, I will quote from another contemporary Liberal practitioner, a literary critic this time:

> Aided by psycho-analysis, which gave them new weapons, many of the poets and dramatists of our day have dug into the most perverse of human complexes, exposing them with the scalpel of a surgeon rather than that of a philosopher.[19]

At this point I may do well to anticipate a possible misunderstanding. In applying the standard of orthodoxy to contemporary literature my emphasis will be upon its collective rather than its static meaning. A superficial

apprehension of the term might suggest the assumption that everything worth saying has been said, and that the possible forms of expression have all been discovered and developed; the assumption that novelty of form and of substance was always to be deprecated. What is objectionable, from the point of view which I have adopted, is not novelty or originality in themselves, but their glorification for their own sake. The artist's concern with originality, certainly, may be considered as largely negative: he wishes only to avoid saying what has already been said as well as it can be. But I am not here occupied with the standards, ideals and rules which the artist or writer should set before himself, but with the way in which his work should be taken by the reader; not with the aberrations of writers, but with those of readers and critics. To assert that a work is "original" should be very modest praise: it should be no more than to say that the work is not patently negligible. Contemporary literature may conveniently be divided as follows. There is first that which attempts to do what has already been done perfectly, and it is to this superfluous kind of writing that the word "traditional" is commonly applied: *mis*-applied, for the word itself implies a movement. Tradition cannot mean standing still. Of course, no writer ever admits to himself that he has *no* originality; but the fact that a writer can be satisfied to use the exact idiom of a predecessor is very suspicious; you cannot write satire in the line of Pope or the stanza of Byron. The second kind of contemporary writing aims at an exaggerated novelty, a novelty usually of a trifling kind, which conceals from the uncritical reader a fundamental commonplaceness. If you examine the works of any great innovator in chronological order, you may expect to find that the author has been driven on, step by step, in his innovations, by an inner necessity, and that the novelty of form has rather been forced upon him by his material than deliberately sought. It is well also to remember that what any one writer can contribute in the way of "originality" is very small indeed, and has often a pitifully small relation to the mass of his writings.

As for the small number of writers, in this or any other period, who are worth taking seriously, I am very far from asserting that any of these is wholly "orthodox" or even that it would be relevant to rank them according to degrees of orthodoxy. It is not fair, for one thing, to judge the individual by what can be actual only in society as a whole; and most of us are heretical in one way or another. Nor is the responsibility solely with the individual. Furthermore, the essential of any important heresy is not simply that it is wrong: it is that it is partly right. It is characteristic of the more

interesting heretics, in the context in which I use the term, that they have an exceptionally acute perception or profound insight, of some part of the truth; an insight more important often than the inferences of those who are aware of more but less acutely aware of anything. So far as we are able to redress the balance, effect the compensation, ourselves, we may find such authors of the greatest value. If we value them as they value themselves we shall go astray. And in the present state of affairs, with the low degree of education to be expected of public and of reviewers, we are more likely to go wrong than right; we must remember too, that an heresy is apt to have a seductive simplicity, to make a direct and persuasive appeal to intellect and emotions, and to be altogether more plausible than the truth.

It will already have been observed that my contrast of heresy and orthodoxy has some analogy to the more usual one of romanticism and classicism; and I wish to emphasise this analogy myself, as a safeguard against carrying it too far. I would wish in any case to make the point that romanticism and classicism are not matters with which creative writers can afford to bother over much, or with which they do, as a rule, in practice greatly concern themselves. It is true that from time to time writers have labelled themselves "romanticists" or "classicists," just as they have from time to time banded themselves together under other names. These names which groups of writers and artists give themselves are the delight of professors and historians of literature, but should not be taken very seriously; their chief value is temporary and political – that, simply, of helping to make the authors known to a contemporary public; and I doubt whether any poet has ever done himself anything but harm by attempting to write as a "romantic" or as a "classicist." No sensible author, in the midst of something that he is trying to write, can stop to consider whether it is going to be romantic or the opposite. At the moment when one writes, one is what one is, and the damage of a lifetime, and of having been born into an unsettled society,[20†] cannot be repaired at the moment of composition.

The danger of using terms like "romantic" and "classic" – this does not however give us permission to avoid them altogether – does not spring so much from the confusion caused by those who use these terms about their own work, as from inevitable shifts of meaning in context. We do not mean quite the same thing when we speak of a writer as romantic, as we do when we speak of a literary period as romantic. Furthermore, we may have in mind, on any particular occasion, certain virtues or vices more or less justly associated with one term or the other, and it is doubtful whether there is

any total sum of virtues or of vices which may be arrogated to either class. The opportunities for systematic misunderstanding, and for futile controversy, are accordingly almost ideal; and discussion of the subject is generally conducted by excitement of passion and prejudice, rather than by reason. Finally – and this is the most important point – the differences represented by these two terms are not such as can be confined to a purely literary context. In using them, you are ultimately bringing in all human values, and according to your own scheme of valuation. A thorough-going classicist is likely to be a thorough-going individualist, like the late Irving Babbitt; so that one should be on guard, in using such terms, against being thorough-going.

When we press such a term to an exactness which it will not bear, confusions are bound to occur. Such, for instance, is the association sometimes made between classicism and Catholicism. It is possible for a man to adhere to both; but he should not be under the delusion that the connexion is necessarily objective: it may spring from some unity within himself, but that unity, as it is in him, may not be valid for the rest of the world. And you cannot treat on the same footing the maintenance of religious and literary principles. I have said that you cannot restrict the terms "romantic" and "classical," as professors of literature conveniently do, to the literary context; but on the other hand you cannot wholly free them from that context either. There is surely something wrong when a critic divides all works of art neatly into one group and the other and then plumps for the romantic or the classical as a whole. Whichever you like in theory, it is suspicious if you prefer works altogether of one class in practice: probably you have either made the terms merely names for what you admire and for what you dislike, or you have forced and falsified your tastes.[21]* Here again is the error of being too thorough-going.

I may as well admit at this point that in this discussion of terms I have my own log to roll. Some years ago, in the preface to a small volume of essays, I made a sort of summary declaration of faith in matters religious, political and literary.[22] The facility with which this statement has been quoted has helped to reveal to me that as it stands the statement is injudicious. It may suggest that the three subjects are of equal importance to me, which is not so; it may suggest that I accept all three beliefs on the same grounds, which is not so; and it may suggest that I believe that they all hang together or fall together, which would be the most serious misunderstanding of all. That there are connexions for me I of course admit, but these

illuminate my own mind rather than the external world; and I now see the danger of suggesting to outsiders that the Faith is a political principle or a literary fashion, and the sum of all a dramatic posture.

From another aspect also I have a personal interest in the clearing up of the use of the terms with which I have been concerned. My friend Dr. Paul Elmer More is not the first critic to call attention to an apparent incoherence between my verse and my critical prose – though he is the first whose perplexity on this account has caused me any distress.[23] It would appear that while I maintain the most correct opinions in my criticism, I do nothing but violate them in my verse; and thus appear in a double, if not double-faced role. I feel no shame in this matter. I am not of course interested by those critics who praise my criticism in order to discredit my verse, or those who praise my verse in order to discredit my opinions in religious or social affairs; I am only interested in answering those critics who, like Dr. More, have paid me the compliment – deserved or not does not here matter – of expressing some approval of both. I should say that in one's prose reflexions one may be legitimately occupied with ideals, whereas in the writing of verse one can only deal with actuality. Why, I would ask, is most religious verse so bad; and why does so little religious verse reach the highest levels of poetry? Largely, I think, because of a pious insincerity. The capacity for writing poetry is rare; the capacity for religious emotion of the first intensity is rare; and it is to be expected that the existence of both capacities in the same individual should be rarer still. People who write devotional verse are usually writing as they want to feel, rather than as they do feel. Likewise, in an age like the present, it could only be poetry of the very greatest rank that could be genuinely what Dr. More would be obliged to call "classical"; poets of lower ability – that is all but such as half a dozen perhaps in the world's history – could only be "classical" by being pseudo-classical; by being unfaithful and dishonest to their experience. It should hardly be necessary to add that the "classical" is just as unpredictable as the romantic, and that most of us would not recognise a classical writer if he appeared, so queer and horrifying he would seem even to those who clamour for him.

I hold – in summing up – that a *tradition* is rather a way of feeling and acting which characterises a group throughout generations; and that it must largely be, or that many of the elements in it must be, unconscious; whereas the maintenance of *orthodoxy* is a matter which calls for the exercise of all our conscious intelligence. The two will therefore considerably

complement each other. Not only is it possible to conceive of a tradition being definitely bad; a good tradition might, in changing circumstances, become out of date. Tradition has not the means to criticise itself; it may perpetuate much that is trivial or of transient significance as well as what is vital and permanent. And while tradition, being a matter of good habits, is necessarily real only in a social group, orthodoxy exists whether realised in anyone's thought or not. Orthodoxy also, of course represents a consensus between the living and the dead: but a whole generation might conceivably pass without any orthodox thought; or, as by Athanasius, orthodoxy may be upheld by one man against the world.[24] Tradition may be conceived as a by-product of right living, not to be aimed at directly. It is of the blood, so to speak, rather than of the brain: it is the means by which the vitality of the past enriches the life of the present. In the co-operation of both is the reconciliation of thought and feeling. The concepts of *romantic* and *classic* are both more limited in scope and less definite in meaning. Accordingly they do not carry with them the implication of absolute value which those who have defended one against the other would give them: it is only in particular contexts that they can be contrasted in this way, and there are always values more important than any that either of these terms can adequately represent. I propose in my second lecture to illustrate these general reflexions by some application to modern English literature.[25†]

II

I hope that it is quite clear, both for the sake of what I have said already and for the sake of what I have still to say, that the sense in which I am using the terms *tradition* and *orthodoxy* is to be kept distinctly in mind as not identical with the use of the same terms in theology. The difference is widest with the term *tradition*, for I have wished to use the word to cover much in our lives that is accounted for by habit, breeding and environment. I should not on the other hand like to have it supposed that my meanings were arbitrarily chosen. That they bear a relation to the more exact meanings I have no wish to conceal: if they did not, my discussion of these matters would lose all significance. But the two terms have been so frequently and so subtly expounded by more philosophical writers, that I would guard against being thought to employ, in a loose and inexpert manner, terms which have already been fully and sharply defined. With the terms in their

theological use I shall presume no acquaintance; and I appeal only to your common-sense: or, if that word sounds too common, to your wisdom and experience of life. That an acceptance of the validity of the two terms as I use them should lead one to dogmatic theology, I naturally believe; but I am not here concerned with pursuing investigation in that path. My enquiries take the opposite direction: let us consider the denial or neglect of tradition in my mundane sense, and see what *that* leads to.

The general effect in literature of the lack of any strong tradition is twofold: extreme individualism in views, and no accepted rules or opinions as to the limitations of the literary job. I have spoken elsewhere[26*] of poetry as a substitute for religion, and of kinds of criticism which assumed that the function of poetry was to replace religion. The two results are naturally concomitant. When one man's "view of life" is as good as another's, all the more enterprising spirits will naturally evolve their own; and where there is no custom to determine what the task of literature is, every writer will determine for himself, and the more enterprising will range as far afield as possible. But at this point I should develop one distinction between the usual sense of "orthodoxy" and that in which it is here used. I do not take orthodoxy to mean that there is a narrow path laid down for every writer to follow. Even in the stricter discipline of the Church, we hardly expect every theologian to succeed in being orthodox in every particular, for it is not a sum of theologians, but the Church itself, in which orthodoxy resides. In my sense of the term, perfect orthodoxy in the individual artist is not always necessary, or even desirable. In many instances it is possible that an indulgence of eccentricities is the condition of the man's saying anything at all. It is impossible to separate the "poetry" in *Paradise Lost* from the peculiar doctrines that it enshrines; it means very little to assert that if Milton had held more normal doctrines he would have written a better poem; as a work of literature, we take it as we find it: but we can certainly enjoy the poetry and yet be fully aware of the intellectual and moral aberrations of the author. It is true that the existence of a right tradition, simply by its influence upon the environment in which the poet develops, will tend to restrict eccentricity to manageable limits: but it is not even by the lack of this restraining influence that the absence of tradition is most deplorable. What is disastrous is that the writer should deliberately give rein to his "individuality," that he should even cultivate his differences from others; and that his readers should cherish the author of genius, not in

spite of his deviations from the inherited wisdom of the race, but because of them.

What happens is not, to be sure, always just what the author intends. It is fatally easy, under the conditions of the modern world, for a writer of genius to conceive of himself as a Messiah. Other writers, indeed, may have had profound insights before him; but we readily believe that everything is relative to its period of society, and that these insights have now lost their validity; a new generation is a new world, so there is always a chance, if not of delivering a wholly new gospel, of delivering one as good as new. Or the messiahship may take the form of revealing for the first time the gospel of some dead sage, which no one has understood before; which owing to the backward and confused state of men's minds has lain unknown to this very moment; or it may even go back to the lost Atlantis and the ineffable wisdom of primitive peoples. A writer who is fired with such a conviction is likely to have some devoted disciples; but for posterity he is liable to become, what he will be for the majority of his contemporaries, merely one among many entertainers. And the pity is that the man *may* have had something to say of the greatest importance: but to announce, as your own discovery, some truth long known to mankind, is to secure immediate attention at the price of ultimate neglect.

The general effect upon readers – most of them quite uneducated – is quite different from what the serious messiah intends. In the first place, no modern messiah can last for more than a generation; it is tacitly assumed that the leaders of the previous generation are as useless as the soldiers who died in the first year of a hundred years' war (and alas, they mostly are); those who enjoy the normal span of life may be sure of surviving their popularity. Secondly, as the public is not very well qualified for discriminating between nostrums, it comes to enjoy sampling all, and taking none seriously. And finally, in a world that has as nearly lost all understanding of the meaning of *education* as it well can, many people act upon the assumption that the mere accumulation of "experiences," including literary and intellectual experiences, as well as amorous and picaresque ones, is – like the accumulation of money – valuable in itself. So that a serious writer may sweat blood over his work, and be appreciated as the exponent of still one more "point of view."

It is too much to expect any literary artist at the present time to be a model of orthodoxy. That, as I have said, is something to demand only in a spirit of indulgent criticism at any time: it is not to be demanded now. It is

a very different thing to be a classical author in a classical age, and to maintain classical ideals in a romantic age. Furthermore, I ask the same compassion for myself that I would have you extend to others. What we can try to do is to develop a more critical spirit, or rather to apply to authors critical standards which are almost in desuetude. Of the contemporary authors whom I shall mention, I cannot recall having seen any criticism in which these standards have been employed.

Perhaps it will make the foregoing considerations appear more real, and exonerate me from the charge of dealing only in abstractions, offering only a kind of unredeemable paper currency, if at this point I give testimony in the form of three contemporary short stories, all of very great merit. It was almost by accident that I happened to read all of these stories in rapid succession during the course of some recent work at Harvard.[27] One is "Bliss" by Katherine Mansfield; the second is "The Shadow in the Rose Garden" by D. H. Lawrence, and the third "The Dead" by James Joyce.[28]* They are all, I believe, fairly youthful work; and all turn on the same theme of disillusion. In Miss Mansfield's story a wife is disillusioned about her relations with her husband; in the others a husband is disillusioned about his relations with his wife. Miss Mansfield's story – it is one of her best known – is brief, poignant and in the best sense, slight; Mr. Joyce's is of considerable length. What is interesting in the three together is the differences of moral implication. In "Bliss," I should say, the moral implication is negligible: the centre of interest is the wife's feeling, first of ecstatic happiness, and then at the moment of revelation. We are given neither comment nor suggestion of any moral issue of good and evil, and within the setting this is quite right. The story is limited to this sudden change of feeling, and the moral and social ramifications are outside of the terms of reference. As the material is limited in this way – and indeed our satisfaction recognises the skill with which the author has handled perfectly the *minimum* material – it is what I believe would be called feminine. In the story of Lawrence there is a great deal more than that; he is concerned with the feelings of both husband and wife; and as the tempo is much slower (no story of any considerable structure could move as rapidly as Miss Mansfield's does) there is time for thought as well as feeling, and for calculated action. An accident, trifling in itself, but important in the twist which Lawrence gives to it, leads or forces the wife to reveal to her commonplace lower middle-class husband (no writer is more conscious of class-distinctions than Lawrence) the facts of her intrigue with an army officer several years before their marriage.

The disclosure is made with something nearly approaching conscious cruelty. There is cruelty, too, in the circumstances in which she had met her former lover:

> "And I saw him to-day," she said. "He is not dead, he's mad." Her husband looked at her, startled. "Mad!" he said involuntarily. "A lunatic," she said.

Of this alarming strain of cruelty in some modern literature I shall have something more to say later. What I wish chiefly to notice at this point, is what strikes me in all of the relations of Lawrence's men and women: the absence of any moral or social sense. It is not that the author, in that Olympian elevation and superior indifference attributed to great artists, and which I can only imperfectly understand, has detached himself from any moral attitude towards his characters; it is that the characters themselves, who are supposed to be recognisably human beings, betray no respect for, or even awareness of, moral obligations, and seem to be unfurnished with even the most commonplace kind of conscience. In Mr. Joyce's story, which is very much longer and which incidentally employs a much more elaborate and interesting method, the wife is saddened by memories associated with a song sung at an evening party which has just been described in minute detail. In response to solicitous questions by her husband, she reveals the fact that the song had been sung by a boy she knew in Galway when she was a girl, and that between them was an intense romantic and spiritualised love. She had had to go away; the boy had risen from a sick bed to come to say goodbye to her; and he had in consequence died. That is all there was to it; but the husband realises that what this boy had given her was something finer than anything he had to give. And as the wife falls asleep at last:

> Generous tears filled Gabriel's eyes. He had never felt like that himself towards any woman, but he knew that such a feeling must be love. The tears gathered more thickly in his eyes and in the partial darkness he imagined he saw the form of a young man standing under a dripping tree. Other forms were near. His soul had approached that region where dwell the vast hosts of the dead.

It is impossible to produce the full value of evidence such as this without reading the stories entire; but something of what I have in mind should now be apparent. We are not concerned with the authors' *beliefs*, but with

orthodoxy of sensibility and with the sense of tradition, our degree of approaching "that region where dwell the vast hosts of the dead." And Lawrence is for my purposes, an almost perfect example of the heretic. And the most ethically orthodox of the more eminent writers of my time is Mr. Joyce. I confess that I do not know what to make of a generation which ignores these considerations.

I trust that I shall not be taken as speaking in a spirit of bigotry when I assert that the chief clue to the understanding of most contemporary Anglo-Saxon literature is to be found in the decay of Protestantism. I am not concerned with Protestantism itself: and to discuss that we should have to go back to the seventeenth century. I mean that amongst writers the rejection of Christianity – Protestant Christianity – is the rule rather than the exception; and that individual writers can be understood and classified according to the type of Protestantism which surrounded their infancy, and the precise state of decay which it had reached. I should include those authors who were reared in an "advanced" or agnostic atmosphere, because even agnosticism – *Protestant* agnosticism – has decayed in the last two generations. It is this background, I believe, that makes much of our writing seem provincial and crude in the major intellectual centres of Europe – everywhere except northern Germany and perhaps Scandinavia; it is this which contributes the prevailing flavour of immaturity. One might expect the unlovelier forms of this decline to be more deeply marked upon American authors than upon English, but there is no reason to generalise: nothing could be much drearier (so far as one can judge from his own account) than the vague hymn-singing pietism which seems to have consoled the miseries of Lawrence's mother, and which does not seem to have provided her with any firm principles by which to scrutinise the conduct of her sons. But lest I be supposed to be concerned primarily with the decay of morals (and especially sexual morals) I will mention the name of one for whose memory I have the highest respect and admiration: that of the late Irving Babbitt.

It is significant to observe that Babbitt was saturated with French culture; in his thought and in his intercourse he was thoroughly cosmopolitan. He believed in tradition; for many years he stood almost alone in maintaining against the strong tendency of the time a right theory of education; and such effects of decadence as are manifest in Lawrence's work he held in abomination. And yet to my mind the very width of his culture, his intelligent eclecticism, are themselves symptoms of a narrowness of

tradition, in their extreme reaction against that narrowness. His attitude towards Christianity seems to me that of a man who had had no *emotional* acquaintance with any but some debased and uncultured form: I judge entirely on his public pronouncements and not at all on any information about his upbringing. It would be exaggeration to say that he wore his cosmopolitanism like a man who had lost his *complet bourgeois* and had to go about in fancy dress.[29] But he seemed to be trying to compensate for the lack of living tradition by a herculean, but purely intellectual and individual effort. His addiction to the philosophy of Confucius is evidence: the popularity of Confucius among our contemporaries is significant.[30] Just as I do not see how anyone can expect really to understand Kant and Hegel without knowing the German language and without such an understanding of the German mind as can only be acquired in the society of living Germans, so *a fortiori* I do not see how anyone can understand Confucius without some knowledge of Chinese and a long frequentation of the best Chinese society. I have the highest respect for the Chinese mind and for Chinese civilisation; and I am willing to believe that Chinese civilisation at its highest has graces and excellences which may make Europe seem crude. But I do not believe that I, for one, could ever come to understand it well enough to make Confucius a mainstay.

I am led to this conclusion partly by an analogous experience. Two years spent in the study of Sanskrit under Charles Lanman, and a year in the mazes of Patanjali's metaphysics under the guidance of James Woods, left me in a state of enlightened mystification.[31] A good half of the effort of understanding what the Indian philosophers were after – and their subtleties make most of the great European philosophers look like schoolboys – lay in trying to erase from my mind all the categories and kinds of distinction common to European philosophy from the time of the Greeks. My previous and concomitant study of European philosophy was hardly better than an obstacle. And I came to the conclusion – seeing also that the "influence" of Brahmin and Buddhist thought upon Europe, as in Schopenhauer, Hartmann, and Deussen,[32] had largely been through romantic misunderstanding – that my only hope of really penetrating to the heart of that mystery would lie in forgetting how to think and feel as an American or a European: which, for practical as well as sentimental reasons, I did not wish to do. And I should imagine that the same choice would hold good for Chinese thought: though I believe that the Chinese mind is very much nearer to the Anglo-Saxon than is the Indian. China is – or was until the missionaries initiated

her into Western thought, and so blazed a path for John Dewey[33] – a country of tradition; Confucius was not born into a vacuum; and a network of rites and customs, even if regarded by philosophers in a spirit of benignant scepticism, make a world of difference. But Confucius has become the philosopher of the rebellious Protestant. And I cannot but feel that in some respects Irving Babbitt, with the noblest intentions, has merely made matters worse instead of better.[34]

The name of Irving Babbitt instantly suggests that of Ezra Pound (his peer in cosmopolitanism) and that of I. A. Richards: it would seem that Confucius is the spiritual adviser of the highly educated and fastidious, in contrast to the dark gods of Mexico.[35] Mr. Pound presents the closest counterpart to Irving Babbitt. Extremely quick-witted and very learned, he is attracted to the Middle Ages, apparently, by everything except that which gives them their significance. His powerful and narrow post-Protestant prejudice peeps out from the most unexpected places: one can hardly read the erudite notes and commentary to his edition of Guido Cavalcanti[36] without suspecting that he finds Guido much more sympathetic than Dante, and on grounds which have little to do with their respective merits as poets: namely, that Guido was very likely a heretic, if not a sceptic – as evidenced partly by his possibly having held some pneumatic philosophy and theory of corpuscular action which I am unable to understand. Mr. Pound, like Babbitt, is an individualist, and still more a libertarian.

Mr. Pound's theological twist appears both in his poetry and his prose; but as there are other vigorous prose writers, and as Mr. Pound is probably the most important living poet in our language, a reference to his poetry will carry more weight. At this point I shall venture to generalise, and suggest that with the disappearance of the idea of Original Sin, with the disappearance of the idea of intense moral struggle, the human beings presented to us both in poetry and in prose fiction to-day, and more patently among the serious writers than in the underworld of letters, tend to become less and less real. It is in fact in moments of moral and spiritual struggle depending upon spiritual sanctions, rather than in those "bewildering minutes" in which we are all very much alike, that men and women come nearest to being real.[37] If you do away with this struggle, and maintain that by tolerance, benevolence, inoffensiveness and a redistribution or increase of purchasing power, combined with a devotion, on the part of an élite, to Art, the world will be as good as anyone could require, then you must expect human beings to become more and more vaporous. This is exactly

what we find of the society which Mr. Pound puts in Hell, in his *Draft of XXX Cantos*.[38] It consists (I may have overlooked one or two species) of politicians, profiteers, financiers, newspaper proprietors and their hired men, *agents provocateurs*, Calvin, St. Clement of Alexandria, the English, vice-crusaders, liars, the stupid, pedants, preachers, those who do not believe in Social Credit, bishops, lady golfers, Fabians, conservatives and imperialists; and all "those who have set money-lust before the pleasures of the senses" [65]. It is, in its way, an admirable Hell, "without dignity, without tragedy" [67]. At first sight the variety of types – for these are types, and not individuals – may be a little confusing; but I think it becomes a little more intelligible if we see at work three principles, (1) the aesthetic, (2) the humanitarian, (3) the Protestant. And I find one considerable objection to a Hell of this sort: that a Hell altogether without dignity implies a Heaven without dignity also. If you do not distinguish between individual responsibility and circumstances in Hell, between essential Evil and social accidents, then the Heaven (if any) implied will be equally trivial and accidental. Mr. Pound's Hell, for all its horrors, is a perfectly comfortable one for the modern mind to contemplate, and disturbing to no one's complacency: it is a Hell for the *other people*, the people we read about in the newspapers, not for oneself and one's friends.[39*]

An equally interesting example of the modern mind is that of the other important poet of our time, Mr. William Butler Yeats. Few poets have told us more about themselves – more, I mean, of what is relevant and of what we are entitled to know – than Mr. Yeats in his *Autobiographies*, a document of great and permanent interest. Mr. Yeats had still greater difficulties to contend with, I should say, than Mr. Pound. He was born of Irish Protestant stock, and was brought up in London; Ireland was for his childhood rather a holiday country, to which his sentiment attached itself; his father adhered to mid-century Rationalism, but otherwise the household atmosphere was Pre-Raphaelite. In *The Trembling of the Veil* he says significantly:

> I was unlike others of my generation in one thing only. I am very religious, and deprived by Huxley and Tyndall, whom I detested, of the simple-minded religion of my childhood, I had made a new religion, almost an infallible church of poetic tradition, of a fardel of stories, and of personages, and of emotions, inseparable from their first expression, passed on from generation to generation by poets and painters with some help from philosophers and theologians.[40]

Thus, in Yeats at the age of sixteen (or at least, as in retrospect he seems to himself to have been at sixteen) is operative the doctrine of Arnold, that Poetry can replace Religion, and also the tendency to fabricate an *individual* religion. The rationalistic background, the Pre-Raphaelite imagery, the interest in the occult, the equally early interest in Irish nationalism, the association with minor poets in London and Paris, make a curious mixture. Mr. Yeats was in search of a tradition, a little too consciously perhaps – like all of us. He sought for it in the conception of Ireland as an autonomous political and social unity, purged from the Anglo-Saxon pollution. He wished also to find access to the religious sources of poetry, as, a little later, did another restless seeker for myths, D. H. Lawrence. The result, for a long period, is a somewhat artificially induced poeticality. Just as much of Swinburne's verse has the effect of repeated doses of gin and water, so much of Mr. Yeats's verse is stimulated by folklore, occultism, mythology and symbolism, crystal-gazing and hermetic writings.

> Who will go drive with Fergus now,
> And pierce the deep wood's woven shade,
> And dance upon the level shore?
> Young man, lift up your russet brow,
> And lift your tender eyelids, maid,
> And brood on hopes and fears no more.[41]

This is to me very beautiful but highly artificial. There is a deliberate evocation of trance, as he virtually confesses in his essay on "The Symbolism of Poetry":

> The purpose of rhythm, it has always seemed to me, is to prolong the moment of contemplation, the moment when we are both asleep and awake, which is the one moment of creation, by hushing us with an alluring monotony, while it holds us waking by its variety, to keep us in that state of perhaps real trance, in which the mind liberated from the pressure of the will is unfolded in symbols.[42]

There is a good deal of truth in this theory, but not quite enough, and its practice exposes Mr. Yeats to the just criticism of Mr. I. A. Richards, as follows:

> [A]fter a drawn battle with the drama, [Mr. Yeats] made a violent repudiation, not merely of current civilisation but of life itself, in favour of a

> supernatural world. But the world of the "eternal moods," of supernal essences and immortal beings is not, like the Irish peasant stories and the Irish landscape, part of his natural and familiar experience. Now he turns to a world of symbolic phantasmagoria about which he is desperately uncertain. He is uncertain because he has adopted as a technique of inspiration the use of trance, of dissociated phases of consciousness, and the revelations given in these dissociated states are insufficiently connected with normal experience.[43]

It is, I think, only carrying Mr. Richards's complaint a little further to add that Mr. Yeats's "supernatural world" was the wrong supernatural world. It was not a world of spiritual significance, not a world of real Good and Evil, of holiness or sin, but a highly sophisticated lower mythology summoned, like a physician, to supply the fading pulse of poetry with some transient stimulant so that the dying patient may utter his last words. In its extreme self-consciousness it approaches the mythology of D. H. Lawrence on its more decadent side. We admire Mr. Yeats for having outgrown it; for having packed away his bibelots and resigned himself to live in an apartment furnished in the barest simplicity. A few faded beauties remain: Babylon, Nineveh, Helen of Troy, and such souvenirs of youth: but the austerity of Mr. Yeats's later verse on the whole, should compel the admiration of the least sympathetic. Though the tone is often of regret, sometimes of resignation:

> Things said or done long years ago,
> Or things I did not do or say
> But thought that I might say or do,
> Weigh me down, and not a day
> But something is recalled,
> My conscience or my vanity appalled.[44]

and though Mr. Yeats is still perhaps a little too much the weather-worn Triton among the streams, he has arrived at greatness against the greatest odds;[45] if he has not arrived at a central and universal philosophy he has at least discarded, for the most part, the trifling and eccentric, the provincial in time and place.

At this point, having called attention to the difficulties experienced by Mr. Pound and Mr. Yeats through no fault of their own, you may be expecting that I shall produce Gerard Hopkins, with an air of triumph, as the orthodox and traditional poet. I wish indeed that I could; but I cannot

altogether share the enthusiasm which many critics feel for this poet, or put him on a level with those whom I have just mentioned. In the first place, the fact that he was a Jesuit priest, and the author of some very beautiful devotional verse, is only partially relevant. To be converted, in any case, while it is sufficient for entertaining the hope of individual salvation, is not going to do for a man, as a writer, what his ancestry and his country for some generations have failed to do. Hopkins is a fine poet, to be sure; but he is not nearly so much a poet of our time as the accidents of his publication and the inventions of his metric have led us to suppose.[46] His innovations certainly were good, but like the mind of their author, they operate only within a narrow range, and are easily imitated though not adaptable for many purposes; furthermore, they sometimes strike me as lacking inevitability – that is to say, they sometimes come near to being purely *verbal*, in that a whole poem will give us *more* of the same thing, an accumulation, rather than a real development of thought or feeling.

I may be wrong about Hopkins's metric and vocabulary. But I am sure that in the matter of devotional poetry a good deal more is at issue than just the purity and strength of the author's devotional passion. To be a "devotional poet" is a limitation: a saint limits himself by writing poetry, and a poet who confines himself to even this subject matter is limiting himself too. Hopkins is not a religious poet in the more important sense in which I have elsewhere maintained Baudelaire to be a religious poet; or in the sense in which I find Villon to be a religious poet; or in the sense in which I consider Mr. Joyce's work to be penetrated with Christian feeling. I do not wish to depreciate him, but to affirm limitations and distinctions. He should be compared, not with our contemporaries whose situation is different from his, but with the minor poet nearest contemporary to him, and most like him: George Meredith. The comparison is altogether to Hopkins's advantage. They are both English nature poets, they have similar technical tricks, and Hopkins is much the more agile. And where Meredith, beyond a few acute and pertly expressed observations of human nature, has only a rather cheap and shallow "philosophy of life" to offer, Hopkins has the dignity of the Church behind him, and is consequently in closer contact with reality. But from the struggle of our time to concentrate, not to dissipate; to renew our association with traditional wisdom; to re-establish a vital connexion between the individual and the race; the struggle, in a word, against Liberalism: from all this Hopkins is a little apart, and in this Hopkins has very little aid to offer us.

What I have wished to illustrate, by reference to the authors whom I have mentioned in this lecture, has been the crippling effect upon men of letters, of not having been born and brought up in the environment of a living and central tradition. In the following lecture I shall be concerned rather with the positive effects of heresy, and with much more alarming consequences: those resulting from exposure to the diabolic influence.

III

I think that there is an interesting subject of investigation, for the student of traditions, in the history of Blasphemy, and the anomalous position of that term in the modern world.[47] It is a curious survival in a society which has for the most part ceased to be capable of exercising that activity or of recognising it. I am persuaded that pretty generally, when that term is used at all, it is used in a sense which is only the shadow of the original. For modern blasphemy is merely a department of bad form: just as, in countries which still possess a Crown, people are usually (and quite rightly) shocked by any public impertinence concerning any member of their Royal Family, they are still shocked by any public impertinence towards a Deity for whom they feel privately no respect at all; and both feelings are supported by the conservatism of those who have anything to lose by social changes. Yet people nowadays are inclined to tolerate and respect any violation which is presented to them as inspired by "serious" purposes; whereas the only disinfectant which makes either blasphemy or obscenity sufferable is the sense of humour: the indecent that is funny may be the legitimate source of innocent merriment, while the absence of humour reveals it as purely disgusting.

I do not wish to be understood as undertaking a defence of blasphemy in the abstract. I am only pointing out that it is a very different thing in the modern world from what it would be in an "age of faith"; just as a magistrate's conception of blasphemy will probably be very different from that of a good Catholic, and his objections to it will be for very different reasons. The whole question of censorship is now of course reduced to ludicrous inconsistency, and is likely to remain so as long as the morals of the State are not those of the Church. But my point is that blasphemy is not a matter of good form but of right belief; no one can possibly blaspheme in any sense except that in which a parrot may be said to curse, unless he profoundly believes in that which he profanes; and when anyone who is not a

believer is shocked by blasphemy he is shocked merely by a breach of good form; and it is a nice question whether, being in a state of intellectual error, he is or is not committing a sin in being shocked for the wrong reasons. It is certainly my opinion that first-rate blasphemy is one of the rarest things in literature, for it requires both literary genius and profound faith, joined in a mind in a peculiar and unusual state of spiritual sickness. I repeat that I am not defending blasphemy; I am reproaching a world in which blasphemy is impossible.

My next point is a more delicate one to handle. One can conceive of blasphemy as doing moral harm to feeble or perverse souls; at the same time one must recognise that the modern environment is so unfavourable to faith that it produces fewer and fewer individuals capable of being injured by blasphemy. One would expect, therefore, that (whatever it may have been at other times) blasphemy would be less employed by the Forces of Evil than at any other time in the last two thousand years. Where blasphemy might once have been a sign of spiritual corruption, it might now be taken rather as a symptom that the soul is still alive, or even that it is recovering animation: for the perception of Good and Evil – whatever choice we may make – is the first requisite of spiritual life. We should do well, therefore, to look elsewhere than to the blasphemer, in the traditional sense, for the most fruitful operations of the Evil Spirit to-day.[48]

I regret, for my present purposes, that I have not a more intimate, accurate and extensive knowledge of the English novelists of the last hundred years, and that therefore I feel a little insecure of my generalisations. But it seems to me that the eminent novelists who are more nearly contemporary to us, have been more concerned than their predecessors – consciously or not – to impose upon their readers their own *personal view of life*, and that this is merely part of the whole movement of several centuries towards the aggrandisement and exploitation of *personality*. I do not suggest that "personality" is an illicit intruder; I imagine that the admirers of Jane Austen are all fascinated by something that may be called her personality. But personality, with Jane Austen, with Dickens and with Thackeray, was more nearly in its proper place. The standards by which they criticised their world, if not very lofty ones, were at least not of their own making. In Dickens's novels, for instance, the religion is still of the good old torpid eighteenth-century kind, dressed up with a profusion of holly and turkey, and supplemented by strong humanitarian zeal. These novelists were still observers: however superficial – in contrast, for instance, to Flaubert – we

find their observations to be. They are orthodox enough according to the light of their day: the first suspicion of heresy creeps in with a writer who, at her best, had much profounder moral insight and passion than these, but who unfortunately combined it with the dreary rationalism of the epoch of which she is one of the most colossal monuments: George Eliot. George Eliot seems to me of the same tribe as all the serious and eccentric moralists we have had since: we must respect her for being a serious moralist, but deplore her individualistic morals. What I have been leading up to is the following assertion: that when morals cease to be a matter of tradition and orthodoxy – that is, of the habits of the community formulated, corrected, and elevated by the continuous thought and direction of the Church – and when each man is to elaborate his own, then *personality* becomes a thing of alarming importance.

The work of the late Thomas Hardy represents an interesting example of a powerful personality uncurbed by any institutional attachment or by submission to any objective beliefs; unhampered by any ideas, or even by what sometimes acts as a partial restraint upon inferior writers, the desire to please a large public. He seems to me to have written as nearly for the sake of "self-expression" as a man well can; and the self which he had to express does not strike me as a particularly wholesome or edifying matter of communication. He was indifferent even to the prescripts of good writing: he wrote sometimes overpoweringly well, but always very carelessly; at times his style touches sublimity without ever having passed through the stage of being good. In consequence of his self-absorption, he makes a great deal of landscape; for landscape is a passive creature which lends itself to an author's mood. Landscape is fitted too for the purposes of an author who is interested not at all in men's minds, but only in their emotions; and perhaps only in men as vehicles for emotions. It is only, indeed, in their emotional paroxysms that most of Hardy's characters come alive. This extreme emotionalism seems to me a symptom of decadence; it is a cardinal point of faith in a romantic age, to believe that there is something admirable in violent emotion for its own sake, whatever the emotion or whatever its object. But it is by no means self-evident that human beings are most real when most violently excited; violent physical passions do not in themselves differentiate men from each other, but rather tend to reduce them to the same state; and the passion has significance only in relation to the character and behaviour of the man at other moments of his life and in other contexts. Furthermore, strong passion is only interesting or significant in

strong men; those who abandon themselves without resistance to excitements which tend to deprive them of reason, become merely instruments of feeling and lose their humanity; and unless there is moral resistance and conflict there is no meaning. But as the majority is capable neither of strong emotion nor of strong resistance, it always inclines to admire passion for its own sake, unless instructed to the contrary; and, if somewhat deficient in vitality, people imagine passion to be the surest evidence of vitality. This in itself may go towards accounting for Hardy's popularity.

What again and again introduces a note of falsity into Hardy's novels is that he will leave nothing to nature, but will always be giving one last turn of the screw himself, and of his motives for so doing I have the gravest suspicion. In *The Mayor of Casterbridge* – which has always seemed to me his finest novel as a whole – he comes the nearest to producing an air of inevitability, and of making the crises seem the consequences of the character of Henchard; the arrangement by which the hero, leaning over a bridge, finds himself staring at his effigy in the stream below is a masterly *tour de force*. This scene is however as much by arrangement as less successful ones in which the motive intrudes itself more visibly; as for instance the scene in *Far from the Madding Crowd* in which Bathsheba unscrews Fanny Robin's coffin – which seems to me deliberately faked. And by this I mean that the author seems to be deliberately relieving some emotion of his own at the expense of the reader. It is a refined form of torture on the part of the writer, and a refined form of self-torture on the part of the reader. And this brings me to the point of this lecture, for the first time.[49†]

I have not so far made it apparent what relation the documents considered in this lecture bear to the subject matter of the last.[50†] I was there concerned with illustrating the limiting and crippling effect of a separation from tradition and orthodoxy upon certain writers whom I nevertheless hold up for admiration for what they have attempted against great obstacles. Here I am concerned with the intrusion of the *diabolic* into modern literature in consequence of the same lamentable state of affairs; and it was for this reason that I took the pains at the beginning to point out that blasphemy is not a matter with which we are concerned. I am afraid that even if you can entertain the notion of a positive power for evil working through human agency, you may still have a very inaccurate notion of what Evil is, and will find it difficult to believe that it may operate through men of genius of the most excellent character. I doubt whether what I am saying can convey very much to anyone for whom the doctrine of Original Sin is

not a very real and tremendous thing. I can only ask you to read the texts, and then reconsider my remarks. And one of the most significant of the Hardy texts is a volume of short stories, indeed of masterly short stories, which has never received enough examination from that point of view: I mean *A Group of Noble Dames*. Here, for one thing, you get essential Hardy without the Wessex staging; without the scenery dear to the Anglo-Saxon heart or the period peasants pleasing to the metropolitan imagination. Not all of these stories, of course, illustrate my point equally well; the best for my purpose, to which I refer you, rather than take up your time by summarising the plot, is "Barbara of the House of Grebe." This is not realism; it is as Hardy catalogues it, "romance and fantasy" with which Hardy can do exactly what he wants to do. I do not object to horror: *Oedipus Rex* is a most horrible plot from which the last drop of horror is extracted by the dramatist; and among Hardy's contemporaries, Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and James's *Turn of the Screw* are tales of horror. But there is horror in the real world; and in these works of Sophocles, Conrad and James we are in a world of Good and Evil. In "Barbara of the House of Grebe" we are introduced into a world of pure Evil. The tale would seem to have been written solely to provide a satisfaction for some morbid emotion.[51]

I find this same strain in the work of a man whose morbidity I have already had occasion to mention, and whom I regard as a very much greater genius, if not a greater artist, than Hardy: D. H. Lawrence. Lawrence has three aspects, and it is very difficult to do justice to all. I do not expect to be able to do so. The first is the ridiculous: his lack of sense of humour, a certain snobbery, a lack not so much of information as of the critical faculties which education should give, and an incapacity for what we ordinarily call thinking. Of this side of Lawrence, the brilliant exposure by Mr. Wyndham Lewis in *Paleface* is by far the most conclusive criticism that has been made.[52] Secondly, there is the extraordinarily keen sensibility and capacity for profound intuition – intuition from which he commonly drew the wrong conclusions. Third, there is a distinct sexual morbidity. Unfortunately, it is necessary to keep all of these aspects in mind in order to criticise the writer fairly; and this, in such close perspective, is almost impossible. I shall no doubt appear to give excessive prominence to the third; but that, after all, is what has been least successfully considered.

I have already touched upon the deplorable religious upbringing which gave Lawrence his lust for intellectual independence: like most people who do not know what orthodoxy is, he hated it. With the more intimate

reasons, of heredity and environment, for eccentricity of thought and feeling I am not concerned: too many people have made them their business already. And I have already mentioned the insensibility to ordinary social morality, which is so alien to my mind that I am completely baffled by it as a monstrosity. The point is that Lawrence started life wholly free from any restriction of tradition or institution, that he had no guidance except the Inner Light, the most untrustworthy and deceitful guide that ever offered itself to wandering humanity. It was peculiarly so for Lawrence, who does not appear to have been gifted with the faculty of self-criticism, except in flashes, even to the extent of ordinary worldly shrewdness. Of divine illumination, it may be said that probably every man knows when he has it, but that any man is likely to think that he has it when he has it not; and even when he has had it, the daily man that he is may draw the wrong conclusions from the enlightenment which the momentary man has received: no one, in short, can be the sole judge of whence his inspiration comes. A man like Lawrence, therefore, with his acute sensibility, violent prejudices and passions, and lack of intellectual and social training, is admirably fitted to be an instrument for forces of good or for forces of evil; or as we might expect partly for one and partly for the other. A trained mind like that of Mr. Joyce is always aware what master it is serving; an untrained mind, and a soul destitute of humility and filled with self-righteousness, is a blind servant and a fatal leader. It would seem that for Lawrence any spiritual force was good, and that evil resided only in the absence of spirituality. Most people, no doubt, need to be aroused to the perception of the simple distinction between the spiritual and the material; and Lawrence never forgot, and never mistook, this distinction. But most people are only very little alive; and to awaken them to the spiritual is a very great responsibility: it is only when they are so awakened that they are capable of real Good, but that at the same time they become first capable of Evil. Lawrence lived all his life, I should imagine, on the spiritual level; no man was less a sensualist. Against the living death of modern material civilisation he spoke again and again, and even if these dead could speak, what he said is unanswerable. As a criticism of the modern world, *Fantasia of the Unconscious* is a book to keep at hand and re-read. In contrast to Nottingham, London or industrial America, his capering redskins of *Mornings in Mexico* seem to represent Life.[53] So they do; but that is not the last word, only the first.

The man's vision is spiritual, but spiritually sick.[54†] The daemonic powers found an instrument of far greater range, delicacy and power in the

author of *The Prussian Officer* than in the author of *A Group of Noble Dames*; and the tale which I used as an example ("The Shadow in the Rose Garden") can be matched by several others. I have not read all of his late and his posthumous works, which are numerous. In some respects, he may have progressed: his early belief in Life may have passed over, as a really serious belief in Life must, into a belief in Death.[55*] But I cannot see much development in *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. Our old acquaintance, the gamekeeper, turns up again: the social obsession which makes his well-born – or almost well-born – ladies offer themselves to – or make use of – plebeians springs from the same morbidity which makes other of his female characters bestow their favours upon savages. The author of that book seems to me to have been a very sick man indeed.[56]

There is, I believe, a very great deal to be learned from Lawrence; though those who are most capable of exercising the judgement necessary to extract the lesson, may not be those who are most in need of it. That we can and ought to reconcile ourselves to Liberalism, Progress and Modern Civilisation is a proposition which we need not have waited for Lawrence to condemn; and it matters a good deal in what name we condemn it. I fear that Lawrence's work may appeal, not to those who are well and able to discriminate, but to the sick and debile and confused; and will appeal not to what remains of health in them, but to their sickness. Nor will many even accept his doctrine as he would give it, but will be busy after their own inventions. The number of people in possession of any criteria for discriminating between good and evil is very small; the number of the half-alive hungry for any form of spiritual experience, or what offers itself as spiritual experience, high or low, good or bad, is considerable. My own generation has not served them very well. Never has the printing-press been so busy, and never have such varieties of buncombe and false doctrine come from it. *Woe unto the foolish prophets, that follow their own spirit, and have seen nothing! O Israel, thy prophets have been like foxes in the waste places. . . . And the word of the* Lord *came unto me, saying, Son of man, these men have taken their idols into their hearts, and put the stumbling-block of their iniquity before their face: should I be inquired of at all by them?*[57]

I wish to add a few words of retrospect and summary, partly as a reminder of how little, in the space of three hours, one can undertake to say about such a serious subject as this. In an age of unsettled beliefs and enfeebled

tradition the man of letters, the poet, and the novelist, are in a situation dangerous for themselves and for their readers. I tried to safeguard myself, in my first lecture, from being taken to be merely a sentimental admirer of some real or imaginary past, and from being taken as a faker of traditions. Tradition by itself is not enough; it must be perpetually criticised and brought up to date under the supervision of what I call orthodoxy; and for the lack of this supervision it is now the sentimental tenuity that we find it. Most "defenders of tradition" are mere conservatives, unable to distinguish between the permanent and the temporary, the essential and the accidental. But I left this theory as a bare outline, to serve as a background for my illustration of the dangers of authorship to-day. Where there is no external test of the validity of a writer's work, we fail to distinguish between the truth of his view of life and the personality which makes it plausible; so that in our reading, we may be simply yielding ourselves to one seductive personality after another. The first requisite usually held up by the promoters of personality is that a man should "be himself"; and this "sincerity" is considered more important than that the self in question should, socially and spiritually, be a good or a bad one. This view of personality is merely an assumption on the part of the modern world, and is no more tenable than several other views which have been held at various times and in several places. The personality thus expressed, the personality which fascinates us in the work of philosophy or art, tends naturally to be the *unregenerate* personality, partly self-deceived and partly irresponsible, and because of its freedom, terribly *limited* by prejudice and self-conceit, capable of much good or great mischief according to the natural goodness or impurity of the man: and we are all, naturally, impure. All that I have been able to do here is to suggest that there are standards of criticism, not ordinarily in use, which we may apply to whatever is offered to us as works of philosophy or of art, which might help to render them safer and more profitable for us.

APPENDIX[58]

I have after some deliberation called this essay a primer of modern heresy: hinting that it is offered primarily to those who may be interested in pursuing the subject by themselves. I had thought of supplementing it by a graduated Exercise Book, beginning with very simple examples of heresy, and leading up to those which are very difficult to solve; and leaving the student to

find the answers for himself. My chief reason for abandoning this project is perhaps the overwhelming abundance of elementary exercises, compared with the paucity of those which can tax the abilities of the really quick and proficient student. I therefore content myself with four examples. No. I is very elementary: countless specimens of the same kind might be found. No. II is slightly, but not much, more advanced. Nos. III and IV are among the most advanced that I can find. A really satisfactory exercise book would require the co-operation of a board of editors. I am not well enough read; and I find to my discomfiture that most of the examples that occur to me hardly rise above the simplicity of No. I. Numerous advanced exercises are possible to those who possess a familiarity with foreign languages.

I

"The barbaric sense of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, with the moral hatred it carried, is giving way to a more natural attitude. Vice offends more from its ugliness than from its sinfulness. Goodness has its appeal in moral beauty rather than in virtue." – JOHN A. HOBSON: *The Moncure D. Conway Lecture* [*Rationalism and Humanism* (London: Watts & Company)] 1933 [40].

II

"At the end of my life as a teacher . . . I am convinced that it is personality that counts always and all the time. . . .

"This question of Latin is a part, and only a part, of what I think is the most important educational question that is now before the country. It is a question which is engaging the attention of the Consultative Committee of the Board of Education at the present moment – the question of what is the right education to give pupils between the ages of 11 and 16 1/2, whose education is not going to be continued beyond that point. Are we giving the right education at the present time? I am pretty certain that we are not.

"I would give a boy first a sound education based on English culture, English geography, English history, and English literature, less mathematics, a different kind of science, and I would not attempt to teach him more than one foreign language. I would also try to give him a thorough physical education, and a thorough training of the hand, eye and ear, and I would seek to make that as important as his literary education. In his last years at school I would seek to build on that foundation some understanding of the modern world, why it is, how it works, and what his place is in it. In that

education I do not think that there will be room or time for Latin, but at present we have not formulated anything like that. It is still an ideal." – DR. CYRIL NORWOOD, addressing the Conference of the Incorporated Association of Preparatory Schools at the Hotel Great Central, Marylebone (["Latin in the Schools"] *The Times* newspaper of December 21, 1933 [11].)

III

"Character, in short, is an impersonal ideal which the individual selects and to which he sacrifices all other claims, especially those of the sentiments or emotions. It follows that character must be placed in opposition to personality, which is the general-common-denominator of our sentiments and emotions. That is, indeed, the opposition I wish to emphasise; and when I have said further that all poetry, in which I wish to include all lyrical impulses whatever, is the product of the personality, and therefore inhibited in a character, I have stated the main theme of my essay." – HERBERT READ: *Form in Modern Poetry* [London: Sheed & Ward, 1932], pp. 18-19.

IV

"Any serious criticism of communist philosophy must start by declaring openly how much of its theory is accepted by the critic. I must therefore preface my criticism by saying that I accept the rejection of idealism and the principle of the unity of theory and practice in the sense in which I have expounded it. And since this is the truly revolutionary principle, such an acceptance involves taking one's stand within the tradition of thought which derives from Marx. The negative implications of accepting this fundamental principle go very deep. They include the rejection of all philosophy and all social theory which does not accept this principle, not because of particular objections to their conclusions, but because of a complete break with the assumptions upon which they are based and the purpose which governs their development. They involve the belief that all theory must seek verification in action and adapt itself to the possibility of experiment. They make a clean sweep of speculative thought on the ground that the validity of no belief whatever is capable of demonstration by argument. They involve a refusal at any point to make knowledge an end in itself, and equally, the rejection of the desire for certainty which is the motive governing speculative thought." – JOHN MACMURRAY: *The Philosophy of Communism* [London: Faber & Faber, 1933], pp. 62-63.

NOTES

1. Epigraph on title page: "καὶ ταῦτ' ἰὼν / εἴσω λογίζου· κἂν λάβῃς ἐψευσμένον, / φάσκειν ἔμ' ἤδη μαντικῇ μηδὲν φρονεῖν. – *Oedipus Rex* 1.460-462."

Trans: (Teiresias to Oedipus): "Go within, reckon that out, and if you find me / mistaken, say I have no skill in prophecy." Trans: David Grene, *Sophocles. I*, ed. David Grene and Robert Fitzgerald (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1954), 30; separate dedication page: "To Alfred and Ada Sheffield" [Alfred Sheffield (1871-1961), husband of Ada Eliot (1869-1943), TSE's elder sister]; separate textual epigraph page [9]:

> Das Chaos in der "Literatur," die mit vagen Grenzen zwar, aber immer noch deutlich ein Gebiet für sich ist; sie, die in gesunden Zeiten ein relativ reiner, gefälliger Spiegel aller herrschenden Dinge und Undinge ist, in kranken, chaotischen ein selber trüber all der trüben Dinge und Ideen, die es gibt, ist zur cloaca maxima geworden. Jegliche Unordnung im Humanen, im Menschen selber – ich sprach von dem dreifachen Gesichtspunkt, unter dem sie betrachtet werden kann, dem Primat der Lust, dem Primat der Sentimentalität, dem Primat der technischen Intelligenz – an Stelle der einzig wahren hierarchischen Ordnung, des Primates des Geistes und des Spiritualen – jegliche Unordnung findet ihr relativ klares oder meist selber noch neuerlich verzerrtes Bild in der Literatur dieser Tage.
>
> –Theodor Haecker: *Was ist der Mensch*? [Leipzig: Jakob Hegner, 1933] p. 65.

> *Trans*: The chaos in "literature," which is still clearly a field in itself, though with ill-defined boundaries; this literature, which in healthy times is a relatively pure and pleasant mirror of all current things and absurdities, and in sick and chaotic times a correspondingly murky reflection of all murky things and ideas that exist, has become a cloaca maxima. Every disorder in human affairs, in man himself – I spoke of the threefold point of view under which this disorder can be considered: the primacy of desire, the primacy of sentimentality, the primacy of technical intelligence, instead of the only true hierarchical order, namely the primacy of intellect and the spiritual – every disorder finds its relatively clear or newly distorted reflection in the literature of this time.
>
> –Theodor Haecker: *What Is Man?*

On 26 Jan 1934, TSE wrote to publisher Thomas F. Burns of Sheed and Ward, a Catholic publishing house, that Herbert Read had informed him of Haecker's book: "I am much interested in Haecker's work, and I am publishing an essay of his in the next *Criterion* ["Theodicy and Tragedy" (Apr 1934), 371-81], so I read this book through. I was on the whole really enthusiastic about it, and want to draw it to your attention."

2. The Page-Barbour Lectures were founded in 1907 by Mrs. Thomas Nelson Page (*née* Barbour), in honor of her late husband (class of 1874), with a view to bringing eminent speakers in any field of the arts and sciences to the university. On 3 Dec 1932, Professor Wilbur A. Nelson (1890-1969), chair of the Page-Barbour Committee and President-elect John Lloyd Newcomb (1881-1954) both sent separate letters of invitation to TSE, who sent his acceptance on 26 Dec. On 9 May, the individual titles and dates of TSE's three lectures, under the general title, "Tradition and Contemporary Literature," were announced on the front page of the student newspaper, *College Topics*: "The Meaning of Tradition" (10 May), "Modern Poetry" (11 May), and "Three Prose Writers" (12 May), all scheduled in Madison Hall. After returning to England

in June and revising both sets of his American lectures, *The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism*, published in Nov 1933, and *After Strange Gods*, published in Feb 1934, he wrote to Paul Elmer More on 20 June about the "difficulties and . . . short notice" of their composition: "the subject of 'The Use of Poetry' was undertaken merely because it seemed the one on which I could write with the minimum of new reading and thinking; the field of 'After Strange Gods' was one to which my real interest had turned. I therefore feel more regret at the inadequacy of the latter than of the former" (*L7* 245).

3. *Trans:* The modern world degrades. From Charles Péguy, *Cahiers de la quinzaine*, 9 (6 Oct 1907), in *Œuvres en prose complètes*, 2, ed. Robert Burac (Paris: Gallimard, 1988), 720.

4. Scott Buchanan (1895-1968), professor of philosophy and founder of the Great Books program at Virginia, had met TSE in London in 1931 (*L5* 723). In Jan 1933 Buchanan wrote to TSE "vaguely" about the subject of tradition for his lectures, and at greater length on 9 Feb, "more than pleased that you are coming in May," with his "speculations" about the nature of tradition in southern culture:

"These people . . . have a sentimental awareness of a tradition, and the intensity of the sentimental increases as the tangible elements of the tradition disappear. As a matter of fact the tradition is pretty well buried, first in the debris of the Civil War, and secondly under the new commercial and industrial South. The sentiments now take the form of personal loyalties and affection for the countryside, both overheated by desperation and nostalgia. At their worst these express themselves in political deals and real estate developments; at their best they dramatize gossip and patronize folk and chamber music. . . . The taste for and faith in abstract ideas, which as I understand it was an essential formative constituent in the old tradition, is enjoyed vicariously and causes embarrassment when it is brought too close, or disgust when it is reported from the North in its academic form. Intellectual heroes are to be worshipped at a distance with great humility.

As you probably know, the group in Tennessee, that used to call itself the Fugitives and now calls itself the Neo-Confederates, have talked a great deal about this old tradition and the possibility of protecting and saving it. Allen Tate, for instance, has described it in terms of an indigenous paganism that never reached its proper intellectualization in Catholicism. Others of them have talked about Fundamentalism as the preserver of myths and of agriculture as the way of life that stabilizes and nourishes vital rituals. They propose a cultural and possibly a political secession from the North. Almost anybody here who has spent time in Europe or even New York plays speculatively and a little fearfully with Catholicism, but the strong current of Protestantism of the Baptist and Methodist variety soon uproots any seedlings that have sprouted. . . .

Taking my cue from your essay on "Tradition and the Individual Talent" . . . I suggest you talk about Tradition and Intellect. . . . I have no fears about your sensitivity to the situation and the effectiveness of your communication. . . . I hope you won't take what I say in any prescriptive sense. . . . It is somebody's opinion which you might find interesting, and, as you say, a possible starting-point for something you would really like to say anywhere" (King's).

5. The comments of TSE's fellow Faber & Faber director Frank Morley are untraced. Martin D'Arcy wrote to TSE on 26 Dec 1933: "I started reading your lectures and could hardly put them down, though it was late at night. They gave me the greatest pleasure and I can find nothing at all to suggest or criticize. They say so much that I should like to have been able to say, & if I differ at all it is not the main theme on orthodoxy or demonic possession, but in purely individual judgments on persons. I am very glad you let me read them."

6. TSE's first lecture was published separately as "Tradition and Orthodoxy" in *The American Review*, 2 (Mar 1934), 513-28, prior to publication of the American edition of *After Strange Gods* by Harcourt Brace in April. The following opening paragraph precedes the sentence beginning "I have been much interested" in the second paragraph above:

"A recent first visit to Virginia afforded me an appropriate occasion to reconsider a subject on which, some fifteen years ago, I wrote an essay entitled "Tradition and the Individual Talent." In the South one finds, I imagine, at least some recollection of a "tradition," such as the influx of foreign populations has almost effaced in some parts of the North, and such as never established itself in the West: though it is hardly to be expected that a tradition here, any more than anywhere else, should be found in healthy and flourishing growth."

7. TSE's chemical analogy from "Tradition and the Individual Talent" involved "the action which takes place when a bit of finely filiated platinum is introduced into a chamber containing oxygen and sulphur dioxide. . . . When the two gases . . . are mixed in the presence of a filament of platinum, they form sulphurous acid" (2.108-09). TSE was repeatedly corrected about the accuracy of his claim (2.113 n.16).

8. Subtitle: *The South and the Agrarian Tradition* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1930). The twelve contributors were John Crowe Ransom, Donald Davidson, Frank Lawrence Owsley, John Gould Fletcher, Lyle Hicks Lanier, Allen Tate, Herman Clarence Nixon, Andrew Nelson Lytle, Robert Penn Warren, John Donald Wade, Henry Blue Kline, and Stark Young.

9. TSE arrived in Montreal 24 Sept or 25 Sept, then took the train to Boston, arriving there on his birthday, 26 Sept (4.571).

10†. This final sentence does not appear in the *American Review* [hereafter *AR*].

11*. TSE's note: "Or else you may get a *caste* system, based on original distinctions of race, as in India: which is a very different matter from *classes*, which pre-suppose homogeneity of race and a fundamental equality. But social classes, as distinct from economic classes, hardly exist to-day."

12. When asked about this statement by J. V. Healy, a former Harvard student, TSE responded on 10 May 1940: "By free-thinking Jews I mean Jews who have given up the practice and belief of their own religion . . . The Jewish religion . . . shorn of its traditional practices, observances and Messianism . . . tends to become a mild and colourless form of Unitarianism. . . . But my view does not imply any prejudice on the ground of race, but merely a recognition of what seems to me an historical situation. It is quite possible, of course, that all people of Christian descent will become so emancipated from Christianity in the course of time that this sentence of mine will cease to have any meaning." When Isaiah Berlin came across this sentence in 1951 and accosted him about it, TSE replied on 9 Feb 1952 that "the sentence of which you complain (with justice) would never have appeared at all at that time, if I had been aware of what was going to happen, indeed had already begun, in Germany . . . I still do not understand why the word 'race' occurs in the sentence, because my emphasis was on the adjective 'free-thinking.'"

13*. TSE's note: "'To place the redemptive work of the Christian Faith in social affairs in its proper setting, it is necessary to have clearly in mind at the outset that the consciousness of "the nation" as *the* social unit is a very recent and contingent experience. It belongs to a limited historical period and is bound up with certain specific happenings, theories of society and attitudes to life as a whole.' V. A. Demant, *God, Man, and Society*, p. 146." TSE discusses Demant's book in his *Criterion* "Commentary" of Jan 1934 (5.8-9).

14†. In *AR*: *fluctuating circle* [in italics]

15†. This final sentence does not appear in *AR*.

16*. TSE's note: "I should not like to hold any one of them responsible for my opinions, however, or for any that the reader may find irritating. I have in mind Mr. Chesterton and his 'distributism,' Mr. Christopher Dawson (*The Making of Europe*), Mr. Demant and Mr. M. B. Reckitt and their colleagues. I have also in mind the views of Mr. Allen Tate and his friends as evinced in *I'll Take My Stand*, and those of several Scottish nationalists." TSE discusses "the Belloc-Chesterton gospel of Distributive Property" in "Political Theorists" (1927) (3.139) and briefly examines the Christian social philosophy of V. A. Demant and Christopher Dawson regarding the relation of the nation and its religions in his *Criterion* "Commentary" of Jan 1934 (5.000). TSE had earlier discussed Dawson in "Christianity and Communism" (1927) (4.422). Demant and Maurice Reckitt were co-founders of *Christendom: A Journal of Christian Sociology* (1931), which aimed to create a Christian sociology distinct from a Liberal or Marxist sociology. The neo-agrarian views of the relation of culture and religion, as expressed by Allen Tate and other contributors to *I'll Take my Stand*, are mentioned in Lecture I above. TSE probably has in mind the Scots moral philosopher and *Criterion* contributor John Macmurray, author of *The Philosophy of Communism* (1933), quoted in the appendix at the end of Lecture III below. That book was followed by *Creative Society: A Study of the Relation of Christianity to Communism* (1935).

17*. TSE's note: "Quoted in *Northern Catholicism*, p. 9." TSE quotes from C. P. S. Clarke's essay, "The Genesis of the Movement," collected in *Northern Catholicism: Centenary Studies in the Oxford and Parallel Movements*, eds. N. P. Williams and Charles Harris (London: S.P.C.K., 1933). Clarke quotes the above passage (ellipses his) and cites Palmer's *A Narrative of Events Connected with the 'Tracts for the Times'* (London: J. H. Parker, 1843), 29. The Rev. William Palmer (1803-1885), an Irish-born Anglican theologian and liturgical scholar, was associated with Newman and Pusey in the Oxford Movement and was a short-term supporter of Newman's *Tracts for the Times* (1834-41).

18. From "The New Asceticism" by Willard L. Sperry, in *Atlantic Monthly*, 151 (1933), 31. Rev. Sperry (1882-1954) was Dean of the Harvard Divinity School from 1922 to 1953.

19. V. F. (Victor Francis) Calverton (1900-40), American radical reformer, author, and founder-editor of *The Modern Quarterly*, a journal of social thought. The passage above is from his "Contemporary Literature: A Study in Pathology," in *Our Neurotic Age: A Consultation*, ed. Samuel D. Schmalhausen (New York: Farrar & Rinehart, 1932), 307-08; *read*: "Aided by psycho-analysis, these poets and novelists have dug into the most perverse of human complexes, exposing them with the scalpel of a surgeon rather than that of a moralist."

20†. In *AR*: an unsettled or a torpid society,

21*. TSE's note: "For instance: two of my own favourite authors are Sir Thomas Malory and Racine." In his recent review of an edition of Malory's *Le Morte Darthur*, TSE stated that he read Malory "when I was a child of eleven or twelve. It was then, and perhaps has always been, my favourite book" (5.8-9).

22. TSE stated in the Preface to *For Lancelot Andrewes* (1928): "The general point of view may be described as classicist in literature, royalist in politics, and anglo-catholic in religion" (3.513).

23. More's essay, "The Cleft Eliot," appeared in the *Saturday Review*, 9 (12 Nov 1932), 233, 235. "There it is," writes More, "the dilemma that confronts those who recognize Mr. Eliot's

great powers; somehow they must reconcile for themselves what appears to be an inconsequence between the older poet and the newer critic, or must adjust their admiration to what cannot be reconciled. It is not that we have to do with an author who is strong in one phase of his work and weak in another, but that this power is so differently directed here and there. . . . And now against this lyric prophet of chaos must be set the critic who will judge the world from the creed of the classicist, the royalist, and the anglo-catholic, who will see behind the clouds of illusion the steady decrees of a divine purpose" (rpt. in *Contemporary Reviews* 214-17).

24. Saint Athanasius of Alexandria (ca. 295-373), known as "Athanasius contra mundum" [Athanasius against the world], defended Trinitarianism, which upholds the equality of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, against Arianism, which held that the Son of God was not co-eternal with the Father. Athanasius's doctrine and statement of faith are expressed in the Nicene and Athanasian Creeds affirmed by the Eastern Orthodox, Roman Catholic, and Anglican Church, though at the time of the earliest doctrinal controversies regarding the Trinity, Arianism was the considerably more popular and widely held theory.

25†. This final sentence does not appear in *AR*.

26*. TSE's note: "In *The Use of Poetry*." See 4.660.

27. During his Norton Professorship at Harvard (1932-33), TSE taught a course in the spring of 1933 titled "English 26: English Literature from 1890 to the Present Day," in which he included each of the following stories for discussion (4.784).

28*. TSE's note: "From volumes entitled *Bliss* [1920], *The Prussian Officer* [1914], and *Dubliners* [1914] respectively."

29. *complet bourgeois*: lit. "bourgeois suit"; fig. "middle-classness"

30. In "The Humanism of Irving Babbitt" (3.456), TSE criticizes Babbitt's preference for the humanistic traditions of Aristotle and Confucius over the religious traditions of Buddha and Christ, as delineated in *Democracy and Leadership* (London: Constable, 1924).

31. Charles R. Lanman (1850-1941), professor of Sanskrit at Harvard, taught TSE Sanskrit and Pali for two years, 1911-13. Lanman's edition of *A Sanskrit Reader, with Vocabulary and Notes* (1889), inscribed "Cambridge 1912," is in TSE's library; his copy of the Sanskrit edition of *The Twenty-Eight Upanishads*, gifted to TSE by Lanman in May 1912, is at King's. James H. Woods, professor of philosophy, taught TSE Greek philosophy in 1911-12 and Indic philology in 1912-13, including Patanjali's *Yoga-Sutras*.

32. In his eighth Clark lecture, TSE observed that Laforgue was fascinated "by the Kantian pseudo-Buddhism of Schopenhauer and Hartmann" (2.746); both philosophers uphold Kant's doctrine of the will and the Buddhist ideal of desirelessness as a means of allaying the will. Paul Deussen (1845-1919), friend of Schopenhauer and founder of the Schopenhauer Society, studied the Vedantan Brahminist teaching of Śaṅkara in light of Kant's philosophy and published Śaṅkara's Commentary on the *Bhahmasūtras* (1887). In Sept 1913, TSE purchased Deussen's *Sechzig Upanishads des Veda* (1897), to which he refers the reader in the notes to line 401 of *The Waste Land* (*CPP* 80 / *Poems1* 76) and to *Die Sutras des Vedanta* (1887), both of which were listed in the 1936 catalog of his library (Bodleian) but are no longer present.

33. From 1919 to 1921, the American political philosopher John Dewey taught at Peking University, where his study of Chinese nationalism and the philosophy of Confucius led him to propose a Confucian democracy for China and to be known as the "Second Confucius."

34. In delineating his admiration of the humanism of Confucius in *Democracy and Leadership*, Babbitt states that "Confucius is less concerned with the other world than with the art of living to the best advantage in this. To live to the best advantage in this world is, he holds, to live proportionately and moderately" (3). "It is part of my own method," he declares, "to put Confucius behind Aristotle and Buddha behind Christ. The best, however, that even these great teachers can do for us is to help us to discover what is already present in ourselves" (273-74).

35. In "Isolated Superiority" (1928), a review of Pound's *Personae: The Collected Poems*, TSE observes that "a steam-roller of Confucian rationalism (the Religion of a Gentleman, and therefore an Inferior Religion) has flattened over the whole" (3.323); in *Foundations of Aesthetics* (1922), Richards, C. K. Ogden, and James Wood formulate their theory of synaesthesis in the Confucian *Chung Yung*, the Doctrine of Equilibrium and Harmony, which together lead one on "the way of Heaven"; TSE alludes finally to the "Dark gods" in D. H. Lawrence's *Mornings in Mexico* (1927); see n.52, below, on Wyndham Lewis's discussion of the work in his *Paleface* (1929).

36. *Guido Cavalcanti Rime*, Edizione rappezzata fra le rovine, ed. Ezra Pound (Genoa: Edizioni Marsano, 1932).

37. TSE alludes to the "bewildering minute" in *The Revenger's Tragedy* III.iv.73-74, quoted in "Tradition and the Individual Talent": "Are lordships sold to maintain ladyships / For the benefit of a bewildering minute?" (2.110 and n.23).

38. TSE refers to Canto IV in *A Draft of XXX Cantos* (London: Faber & Faber, 1933); first published in Paris in 1930.

39*. TSE's note: "Consult *Time and Western Man* [London: Chatto and Windus, 1927] by Wyndham Lewis." Lewis develops his determination "to repudiate my association with Pound" (57) in two chapters, "Ezra Pound, Etc." (54-64) and "A Man in Love with the Past" (85-90): "He should not be taken seriously as a living being at all. Life is not his true concern . . . He has never loved anything living as he has loved the dead" (87). TSE told his students in English 26 that this volume was Lewis's "most important critical work" (4.793).

40. From "The Trembling of the Veil" (1922), in TSE's copy of *Autobiographies: Reveries over Childhood and Youth and the Trembling of the Veil* (London: Macmillan, 1926), 142-43.

41. From "Who Goes with Fergus?," ll. 1-6; originally a lyric in *The Countess Cathleen* (1892), first published separately in *Poems* (1912).

42. This passage from the essay "The Symbolism of Poetry" first appeared in *The Dome* in 1900; rpt. in *Ideas of Good and Evil* (London: A. H. Bullen, 1903), 237-56; here 247.

43. *Science and Poetry* (New York: Norton, 1926), 86-87.

44. From "Vacillation," stanza V, in *The Winding Stair and Other Poems* (1933).

45. TSE alludes to the opening lines of Yeats's "Men Improve with the Years" (1917), included in *The Wild Swans at Coole* (1919): "I am worn out with dreams; / A weather-worn, marble triton / Among the streams;"

46. After Hopkins's death in 1889, his friend and executor Robert Bridges did not arrange for the publication of his *Poems* until 1918. See TSE's discussion of Hopkins in English 26 (4.780-82).

47. At the request of editor Stringfellow Barr, TSE agreed to publish this lecture separately under the title "Personality and Demonic Possession" in the *Virginia Quarterly Review*, 10 (Jan 1934), 94-103 (hereafter *VQR*; there are minor alterations). TSE sent him the revised typescript on 7 Nov 1933, with apologies for the delay: "Originally, I thought that the third [lecture]

would do for periodical publication in the form in which I delivered it; but the more carefully I looked at it the more defects I saw. Incidentally I have changed the title of the book: at present it is 'After Strange Gods'" (*L6* 703-04). The thirteen-page typescript is in the Alderman Library, University of Virginia.

48. TSE began defining his concept of modern blasphemy in 1927, writing of Homer Haskins's *Renaissance of the Twelfth Century*: "No one has more clearly . . . exposed the twelfth-century anomaly . . . of the finest religious verse and the most brilliant, blasphemous verse. To the present generation of versifiers, so deficient in devotion, and so feeble in blasphemy, the twelfth century might offer an edifying subject of study" (3.175-76). In "Shakespeare and the Stoicism of Seneca," he describes Marlowe as "the most thoughtful, the most blasphemous (and therefore, probably, the most Christian) of his contemporaries" (3.251), and in "A Dialogue on Dramatic Poetry" declares that "it is only the irreligious who are shocked by blasphemy. Blasphemy is a sign of Faith. Imagine Mr. Shaw blaspheming! He could not" (3.399).

49†. In *VQR*: "And this brings me for the first time to the point of this essay."

50†. In *VQR*: The previous sentence does not appear in this paragraph, which begins: "I have concerned myself elsewhere with illustrating the limiting and crippling effect . . . great obstacles."

51. TSE discusses Hardy's novels, stories, and characters in English 26 (4.767-68).

52. In *Paleface: The Philosophy of the "Melting Pot"* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1929), Lewis's primary focus over many pages is on Lawrence's *Mornings in Mexico* (1927), in which he examines Lawrence's artistic primitivism in his "romantic pronouncements" on the Dark gods and "consciousness" of the Mexican Indian. He also takes sideswipes at his other works, characterizing the main principles of Lawrence's mind as "linked in a hot and piping trinity of rough-stuff primitivism, and freudian [*sic*] hot-sex-stuff. With *Sons and Lovers* . . . he was at once hot-foot upon the fashionable trail of incest; the book is an eloquent wallowing mass of Mother-love and Sex-idolatry. His *Women in Love* is again the same thick, sentimental, luscious stew" (180).

53. *Mornings in Mexico*, a collection of eight travel essays, was published in 1927.

54†. In *VQR*: "The intensity of the man's vision is spiritual, but spiritually sick."

55*. TSE's note: "I am indebted to an unpublished essay by Mr. E. W. F. Tomlin for the suggestion that this is so." Tomlin (1913-88), essayist, orientialist, friend of TSE, and regular reviewer for the *Criterion*, evidently transformed the essay into the opening chapter, titled "Man," of *Living and Knowing* (London: Faber & Faber, 1955). "The present work," TSE writes in the blurb, "upon which he has been engaged for some time, is his most comprehensive essay in philosophical speculation." Tomlin states: "Man is surely 'condemned' only in so far as, falling below the spiritual level, he seeks his half-remembered freedom in the sphere of 'nature,' where it is no longer to be found," to which he appends the following note: "It is difficult to believe that the preoccupation of D. H. Lawrence in his last Death Poems with 'alienation' from God, or 'falling out of the hand of God' does not represent a genuine dilemma of the naturalist" (65).

56. *Lady Chatterley's Lover* was published in 1928. TSE briefly discussed it in relation to Joyce's *Ulysses* in English 26 at Harvard, stating that Lawrence's novel, "which otherwise seems and essentially is, the gibbering of an illiterate erotomaniac, becomes more intelligible, though hardly more acceptable, when we understand Lawrence's ideas and his perversities" (4.790).

57. Ezekiel 13:3-4; *read*: "prophets are like the foxes in the deserts." Ezekiel 14:2-3; *read*: "these men have set up their idols in their heart, and put the stumblingblock" (KJV).

58. TSE wrote to Geoffrey Faber on 26 May 1933 to inform him that the University of Virginia agreed to Faber & Faber publishing the lectures in England. Admitting that "three lectures is a very small book," he stated that he intended "to pad it out however with Appendices made out of odd lectures on irrelevant subjects, chiefly education & religion" (*L6* 589).

Le Morte Darthur[1]

A review of *The Noble & Joyous Boke Entytled Le Morte Darthur . . . Whyche Boke Was Reduced in to Englysshe by the Well Dysposyd Knyghte Syr Thomas Malory*

Text prepared by A. S. Mott

Oxford: Printed at the Shakespeare Head Press, and published for the Press by Basil Blackwell, 1933, 2 vols.

The Spectator, 152 (23 Feb 1934) 278

This is the text of *Le Morte Darthur*, printed after Caxton, with no prefaces, introductions or notes, and a very beautiful rubricated piece of book-making indeed. It is for those who appreciate Malory and can afford to possess his book in as grand a form as anyone could wish; and those who enjoy Malory ought to be willing to pay him this honour if they can afford it. I mean no disrespect to this wholly admirable edition in suggesting that we need three more editions to follow it: (1) a cheap edition of the text; (2) a scholarly edition with a full commentary by some person as learned as Miss Jane Harrison or Miss Jessie Weston;[2] and (3) a children's edition. Such an edition was in my hands when I was a child of eleven or twelve. It was then, and perhaps has always been, my favourite book. I have not come across this, or any similar children's edition, since.[3]

What we are, as a matter of fact, familiar with is a kind of children's edition; but it is a children's edition edited according to the wrong principles. I should like to have an edition of the text made *readable* for children, and somewhat abbreviated; that with which Sir Edward Strachey of Sutton Court provided us is an edition meant to be *safe* for children.[4] The most accessible and convenient text for everybody was actually prepared to this end.[5†] Sir Edward announces:

> I do not believe that when we have excluded what is offensive to modern manners there will be found anything practically injurious to the morals of English boys, for whom I have chiefly undertaken this work. [xxxv]

We observe the confusion of *morals* and *manners*. "Lord Tennyson," says Sir Edward, "has shown us how we may deal best with this matter" [xxxv]. Sir Edward believed in the compulsory sterilization of literature. It is not irrelevant to call attention to the degraded moral conceptions of an age in which an editor of Malory could write:

> The morality of "Morte Darthur" is low in one essential thing, and this alike in what it says and in what it omits: and Lord Tennyson shows us how it should be raised. The ideal of marriage, in its relation and its contrast with all other forms of love and chastity, is brought out in every form, rising at last to tragic grandeur, in the *Idylls of the King*. It is not in celibacy, though spiritual and holy as that of Galahad and Percivale, but in marriage, as the highest and purest realisation of the ideal of human conditions and relations, that we are to rise above the temptations of a love like that of Launcelot or even of Elaine; and Malory's book does not set this ideal of life before us with any power or clearness. [xxii]

This, one may remark, is the result of the policy of Henry VIII. Sir Edward might as well have observed that the morality of St. Paul is low in this one essential thing.[6] He does mention St. Paul in this very introduction. And what does he say of St. Paul? "In modern times," he says, "St. Paul has been held to be the model of a gentleman" [lv]. There is nothing more that one can say.

When one compares the present text with that of Sir Edward Strachey, it is perhaps the more trifling alterations of Sir Edward, just because they are trifling, that are the more irritating. One might mention, however, that his bowdlerizing makes the episode of the knight whom Sir Gareth beheads on two different evenings in the hall of Dame Lioness, *completely* unintelligible. But there are places where his tampering is still more fatal. Let us take the birth of Mordred. The Strachey text reads:

> And thither came to him Lot's wife of Orkney . . . and she was a passing fair lady, wherefore the king cast great love unto her, and so was Mordred born, and she was his sister, on the mother side Igraine . . . But all this time King Arthur knew not that king Lot's wife was his sister. [42]

The true text reads:

> And thyder cam to hym kyng Lots wyf of Orkeney . . . for she was a passying fayr lady, wherefore the kyng cast grete love unto her, and desyred

> to lye by her: so they were agreed, and he begate upon her Mordred: and she was his syster on the moders side Igrayne," etc. [vol 1, 26]

It is a very slight alteration. But the incest of Arthur is the foundation of the plot of the whole book, which is almost meaningless without it. Whether it should be minimized in an edition for boys is a question for dispute; but I feel sure that Sir Edward Strachey regarded it as an "impurity," instead of as springing from a profound, tribal, Sophoclean morality. It is indeed to Sophocles and his sources that I should compare Malory. He is a kind of crude northern Homer, a good chronicler, organizer and designer, a fine prose writer, just lacking the poet's power over the word.

The morality of the *Morte Darthur*, as I have suggested, is of that primitive kind which belongs to the nature of things as our shallow modern manners do not. This primitive morality was refined by Christianity; but the passing of Christianity has left only the refinement without the morality, as one can already see in the preface of Sir Edward Strachey; and it ends in a "sense of justice," a humanitarianism, which is finally immoral. To a simpler and truer view of life than ours the moral law is a very real thing, as real and inexorable as natural law – indeed, a part of natural law: the early peoples did not foolishly require, as we do, that morality itself should be moral. Certain acts were sins, and had deadly consequences; and these consequences must follow whether the acts were committed in ignorance or not. They demanded purgation.[7†]

It is, perhaps, most perfectly in Sophocles, but legibly also in Malory, that the pattern of responsibility and fatality is woven. Arthur himself is the offspring of sin, though legitimated; but it is his unwitting sin that is the clue to the whole story. It is his incest-born bastard who shall destroy him; and like Laius, still more like Herod, the paragon king attempts by a most-unchristian slaughter of the innocents born on May day to defeat fate.[8] Arthur throughout is a man under doom, at first admonished by the prophetic voice of Merlin, his Tiresias, himself cursed, not by blindness, but by the blind infatuation which ruins him. Arthur remains without legitimate issue, an unhappy man, dedicated, and under the doom giving his warmest love and highest esteem to the known lover of his wife. And they all remain, like the House of Atreus, and the House of Laius, great people.[9] And like Oedipus at Colonus, the doomed and persecuted of Heaven is reserved for great honour from Heaven; Oedipus and Arthur leave the world not like ordinary men. In life it is not Arthur who triumphs in the lists and in

adventures; he is always partly the observer, the stranger; but it is he, rather than Launcelot or the saint begotten by a sleight, who dominates the scene.

One of the reasons why the *Morte Darthur* is a permanent source of refreshment, is the degree to which the primitive "ritual" stories are and are not integrated into the narrative. The inconsequence of many episodes is important, a consistent inconsequence. It is less, certainly, than appears on first reading. Balin and Balan, those pure folk-lore pre-Christian personages, are connected through the sword of Balin, through the Dolorous Stroke, with Galahad and the Sangreal. And the personalities of the Round Table are excellently well balanced: the simple good – Sir Gareth and Sir Pelleas, Sir Tor and other minor figures; the mixed good and evil, like Sir Gawaine, who are human not on the heroic scale; and the gradation from Sir Bors to Sir Percival (whose sister has significance) to Sir Galahad – whom I mentioned as a saint, but who is more properly *angelic*: certainly not simply human, but the offspring of a virgin sacrifice.[10]

I do not wish to suggest that everything in the *Morte Darthur* is right and inevitable. There are plenty of loose ends. The book is anything but self-explanatory, and there was much of which Sir Thomas Malory was ignorant. I pray that during my lifetime someone may bring out an edition, as bulky as Frazer's *Pausanias*, which shall give the natural history of the Questing Beast, and the etymology of the names of all the knights and kings.[11] I accept Sir La Cote Male Taile, but what about Sir Marhaus, and Sir Suppinabiles, and King Bagdemagus, and Sir Meliagrance, Sir Lamorak and Sir Persant of Inde?[12†]

The Old and New Testaments, and Homer and Aeschylus and Sophocles and Malory, are books which deserve good printing and binding. This book is accordingly well worth nine guineas, and the extra six shillings to have it in full leather.[13]

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. Written after 28 Dec 1933, when TSE wrote to L. C. Knights: "I admit that I have agreed to review one book for the *Spectator*, but that was only under extreme temptation, as it is my favourite book – that is, Malory's *Morte d'Arthur*, and I could not resist the opportunity of having this new edition."

2. Jessie Weston, author of *From Ritual to Romance* (1920), and Jane Harrison, author of *Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion* (1903), both of which TSE studied at Harvard and referred to in his early writings.

3. *King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table: A Modernized Version of the "Morte Darthur"* by Charles Morris (Philadelphia: J. B. Kippincott, 1896), signed: "T. S. Eliot First year class. Smith Academy" (Houghton).

4. *Morte Darthur: Sir Thomas Malory's Book of King Arthur and of his Noble Knights of the Round Table* (London: Macmillan, 1893; first published 1868), the original edition of Caxton revised for modern use, with an introduction by Sir Edward Strachey, 3rd Baronet, of Sutton Court, Somerset (1812-1901).

5†. When editor Derek Verschoyle sent the proof for this article on 9 Feb, he requested that TSE cut twenty-two lines so that it would fit on a single page; the following sentence was the first cut from TSE's submitted typescript: "Sir Edward, hardly adequate as the editor of Edward Lear, soars to the stratosphere of incapacity in introducing Sir Thomas. He announces:" TSE refers to Strachey's introduction to Lear's *Nonsense and Songs* (1891).

6. Regarding celibacy and marriage, Paul writes in 1 Cor. 7:7-9: "For I would that all men were even as I myself. But every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that. I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, it is good for them if they abide even as I. But if they cannot contain, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn" (KJV).

7†. The following lines were cut from the typescript, from here to the beginning of the next paragraph in the text: "And this is not the law of London, or of Paris, or of New York; but it may be true nevertheless.

This doctrine of sin and its consequences, common to the early Greeks and the composers of the tales which Malory set in order, is not a doctrine of fatalism; or if we call it that, we condemn ourselves as well. No doctrine which assigns man complete responsibility, or complete irresponsibility, for his acts can be true to the facts; and a doctrine which attempts to penetrate the mystery and assign precise labels of casuistry is in danger of arid formalism. Of 'fatalism' in the modern sense there is none, any more than there is in the Mahabharata; but there is a belief in Fate, which is not the same thing." The first sentence of the following paragraph was originally the final sentence of this paragraph.

8. Following the advice of the Oracle at Delphi, which prophesied that any son born to him would kill him, King Laius of Thebes had his son Oedipus's ankles pinned together so that he could not crawl; his wife Jocasta then gave the boy to a servant to abandon on a mountain. According to the Gospel of Matthew, Herod ordered the execution of all boys under two in the village of Bethlehem, so as to avoid the loss of his throne to a newborn King of the Jews. At the end of Book I of *Le Morte Darthur*, Merlin prophesies that a child born on May Day will destroy King Arthur, who rounds up all the children born on that day and sends them away on a ship. When it sinks, the only survivor is Mordred, who is rescued and eventually returned to his mother.

9. In Greek mythology, the cursed House of Atreus began with Tantalus, and his descendants included Menelaus, Agamemnon, Iphigenia, Electra, and Orestes.

10. King Pelles, the father of Elaine of Corbenic, has heard a prophecy that Elaine will have a son by Lancelot who will be the greatest of all knights. He enlists a sorceress to make Elaine look like Guenevere, so that Lancelot sleeps with her and she conceives Galahad.

11. Frazer's six-volume *Pausanias's Description of Greece* (1898) is a commentary on the Greek traveler's journey through Greece in the second century AD.

12†. The following lines were cut from the typescript, from here to the beginning of the final sentence of the text: "And I admit that I find the story of Tristram and Isoud is unsatisfactory in its ending; and Matthew Arnold and Richard Wagner have not mended matters. The idea of fatality is there, and provides a fitting under-pattern of Arthur and Guenevere and Launcelot and Elaine and Galahad; but there is a frivolity and inconsequence alien to the central motive.

"Until a sufficient number of people acquaint themselves with the Old and New Testament, and Homer and Aeschylus and Sophocles and Malory, we cannot expect harmony in domestic or international afairs."

13. The two-volume set cost £9 9s. in half leather, and £9 15s. in full leather.

Postcard. Samuel Taylor Coleridge, 1772-1834[1]

Bradford, UK: Printed for the National Portrait Gallery, London, by B. Matthews Photo Printers, 1934.

When five years old had read the *Arabian Nights*. Christ's Hospital and Cambridge. Metaphysician and poet. His life was ill-regulated; weak, slothful, a voracious reader, he contracted an unhappy marriage and much later the habit of taking laudanum. Described his own character in his great *Ode to Dejection* (1802).[2] The greatest English literary critic, he was also the greatest intellectual force of his time. Probably influenced Newman, Maurice, and the Young Tories;[3] and died as the guest of Mr. Gillman of Highgate.[4]

T. S. ELIOT.

NOTES

1. The photograph on the opposite side of the postcard is of the 1795 painting of Coleridge by Peter Vandyke. On 17 Mar 1934, TSE wrote to Sir Evan Charteris, chairman of the trustees of the National Portrait Gallery: "The information has reached me, indirectly, that you have a set of post-cards which is being delayed by my failure to produce a biography of Coleridge. I therefore enclose such a biography, which I hope will suit your purpose." A copy of the postcard is in the Houghton Library.

2. See TSE's Norton lecture on "Wordsworth and Coleridge," his quotation from and discussion there of "Dejection: An Ode," "which in its passionate self-revelation rises almost to the height of great poetry. . . . The lines strike my ear as one of the saddest confessions that I have ever read"; and the concluding sentence of his Norton lectures: "The sad ghost of Coleridge beckons to me from the shadows" (4.625-26, 692).

3. Newman and his disciple F. D. (Frederick Denison) Maurice (1805-72) were to some extent influenced by Coleridge: Newman indicated in "The Prospects of the Anglican Church" (1839) that Coleridge was involved in preparing the way for the Oxford Movement. Young England, a small faction within the Tory Party led by Benjamin Disraeli, included Frederick Faber, a disciple of Newman and an Oxford Movement follower who brought in such young Tory aristocrats as George Smythe and Lord John Manners.

4. In 1816, Coleridge took residence in the home of Dr. James Gillman (1782-1839), who treated him for depression and addiction as he finished the *Biographia Literaria*. Coleridge lived with the Gillman family until he died of heart failure in 1834.

Mr. Eliot's Virginian Lectures

To the Editor of *The New English Weekly*

The New English Weekly, 4 (15 Mar 1934) 528

Sir, – I have read with keen interest Mr. Pound's kindly note upon my Virginian lectures, in your columns; and I find myself in cordial agreement with the major part of what I am able to understand of it.[1] What I do not understand include statements which, to me, have no meaning.

I agree with paragraphs 5, 6, 7, 8, 12, and 13, though not necessarily with every inference that might be drawn from them.[2] Though I fail to see their relevance to the subject of Mr. Pound's note, the truths contained are so important that no opportunity should be missed for repeating them.

I find that paragraph 4 has no meaning for me. That has sometimes been one's experience with statements beginning with the words *the fact is that*. I am also a little surprised to find Mr. Pound, who does not, in his literary criticism, show any great deference towards that spectre, the "average man," citing him as an authority in this context.[3]

Paragraph 11 puzzles me a little. Many of us would admit that there has been and is great ethical weakness within organised Christianity. I do not know whom he means by the "(often subsidised) ecclesiastical bureaucrat."[4]

As for the second sentence of paragraph 14,[5] your readers may find some of these lacunae, and some of the statements which say either too much or too little, pointed out in an admirable review of this book by Mr. Edwin Muir in *The Spectator* of March 9.[6]

If Mr. Pound would rewrite paragraph 9 in Basic English, avoiding phrases like "when religion was real," and "vital phenomena," it might possibly turn out to be a statement which I could accept.[7] I do not understand paragraph 15, but I believe that it contains something which might be put in a form in which it would have some meaning for me.[8]

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. "Mr. Eliot's Mare's Nest," *NEW*, 4 (8 Mar 1934), 500.

2.

5: "In the 'Ages of Faith,' meaning the Ages of Christian faith, religion in the person of the Church concerned itself with ethics. It concerned itself specifically with economic discrimination."

6: "It concerned itself with a root dissociation of two ideas which the last filthy centuries have, to their damnation, lost."

7: "In Dante's intellectual world certain financial activities are 'against nature'; they are damned with sodomy. The Church was not abrogating her claim to judge between good and evil along one of the most vital and intimate lines of social relation."

8: "Creative investment, productive exchange, sharing the profits of shared risk, were considered good. Destructive parasitism was forbidden. I am not arguing, I am stating historic fact. I am not saying that the detailed regulations of mediaeval business can to advantage be resurrected in the identical forms. I am not making a plea for a return to the past."

[11: "The sacerdos has been superseded by the (often subsidized) ecclesiastical bureaucrat."]

12: "This decline was not unexpected and the Middle Ages are full of propaganda and warning against this particular danger."

13: "The battle was won by greed. The language of religion became imprecise, just as the language of all forms of modern flim flam, including popular and philological lectures, has become imprecise."

3. "The fact is that 'religion' long since resigned. Religion in the person of its greatest organized European institution resigned. The average man now thinks of religion either as a left-over or an irrelevance."

4. "The weakness he [Mr. Eliot] is gunning for is NOT a *religious* weakness *in something else*, but an ethical weakness *in* organized Christianity. The sacerdos has been superseded by the (often subsidized) ecclesiastical bureaucrat."

5. "He [Mr. Eliot] was asked to lecture, and then apparently found he was expected to publish what he said verbatim, or at least he so construed his contract, and as a result the pages of this book probably say both more or less than he means, and in any case are full of lacunae."

6. See Edwin Muir, "Mr. Eliot on Evil," *Spectator*, 152 (9 Mar 1934), 378-79.

7. "I am asserting a known and established fact: when religion was real the church concerned itself with vital phenomena in ECONOMICS."

8. "It is highly confusing to find half way through the book that what he means by 'orthodoxy' is merely the extension of literary subject matter to certain ranges of human consciousness that inferior writers now neglect as have inferior writers in other times."

The Theology of Economics

To the Editor of *The New English Weekly*

The New English Weekly, 4 (29 Mar 1934) 575-76

Sir, – To some, at least, of your readers it must be a matter of regret that a paper which is able to express itself so clearly on political and economic matters should have to take refuge (page 532, lower right hand corner) in cloudy truculence when it concerns itself with ecclesiastical polity.[1] As one who was in sympathy with the Archbishop of York's proposals before they were known to the *New English Weekly*, I should be interested to know what this paper thinks of them;[2] and as you say only that "There can be no hesitation in the minds of normal people about the side they are to take," I have what is to me the still more vital interest of wanting to know whether I am, according to the judgment of the *New English Weekly*, a normal person.

It strikes me further that your Theological Editor is inclined to interpret the words *Thy Kingdom Come . . . in earth* in a way of his own. I do not know what he means by its "*native* condition of spirituality": at what date was the Kingdom of Heaven born? And when he speaks of "agony and passion" he is transferring to the Incarnation two terms which are properly applicable to the Atonement.[3] What does your Theological Editor or Leader Writer *mean* by the "Kingdom of Heaven upon Earth"? What does he mean by saying that the ideal mission (I do not know how an ideal mission differs from a mission) of the Church is not of *saving souls alone* but of creating a divine society of Mankind upon Earth? Is not the saving of souls the only way to create a divine society upon Earth? I should like some assurance that by "the Kingdom of Heaven upon Earth" your Theological Editor does not mean the National Dividend.[4]

I trust that I have not been prejudiced – though in the spirit of one laying his cards upon the table I mention the point – by your writer's using the verbs *to pose* and *to sense*.[5]

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. "Notes of the Week," *NEW*, 4 (22 Mar 1934), [529]-32.

2. As reported in the 15 Mar issue of *NEW*, "The Archbishop of York has followed up his recent notable Encyclical on the Economic Problem with an appeal to the Chancellor of the Exchequer to use a Budgetary balance for the increase of Unemployment allowances rather than for the remission of Income-tax" (507).

3. "Is the Kingdom of Heaven to be sought and found upon Earth or is it to be left to be possibly realised in its native condition of spirituality without the agony and passion of its incarnation?" (532).

4. "For unless the Church is by both profession and fact a conscious and leading agent in the task imposed upon it by its presumed Great Founder – the task of creating the Kingdom of Heaven upon Earth – it must not only be the case that the Church is Weakness if not Heresy Incorporated, but its reason for existence is under suspicion as possibly actively anti-Christian. Either, that is to say, the Church must openly profess and strive to fulfil its ideal mission, not of saving souls alone, but of creating a divine society of Mankind on Earth, or, for those to whom the original message still appeals, there can be no further use for the Church or for any communion save hostility with it" (532).

5. "The issue is posed in the discussion that has ensued among Churchmen upon the publication of the Archbishop of York's appeal on behalf of the Unemployed; and that a considerable number of people have already sensed the importance of it is evidenced in the wide public and private interest taken in it" (532).

Shakespearian Criticism

I. From Dryden to Coleridge[1]

I do not propose in this brief sketch to offer a compendium of all that has been written about Shakespeare in three languages in the period I have to cover. For that the reader may turn to Mr. Augustus Ralli's *History of Shakespearian Criticism* (Oxford: 2 volumes).[2] The purpose of a contribution on "Shakespeare Criticism" to such a volume as this, as it seems to me, should be to provide a plan, or pattern, for the reading of the principal texts of Shakespeare criticism. Such a vast amount there is, such a sum of Shakespeare criticism increasing every day at compound interest, that the student of Shakespeare may well wonder whether he should consume his time over Shakespeare criticism at all. The first step, therefore, in offering a scheme of Shakespeare criticism is to give a reason why the student of Shakespeare should read what has been written about him. The second step is to make points of emphasis to show why he should read certain things first, and other things second; rather than occupy himself industriously reading everything that has been written about Shakespeare with equal attention and in perfect chronological order.

Why then, to begin with, should we read all that has been written about Shakespeare, in three hundred years, merely because we want to understand Shakespeare? Should we not rather just soak ourselves in the poetry and drama of Shakespeare, and produce our own opinions, unaided and unencumbered by antiquity, about Shakespeare? But when a poet is a great poet as Shakespeare is, we cannot judge of his greatness unaided; we need both the opinions of other poets, and the diverse views of critics who were not poets, in order to help us to understand. Every view of Shakespeare is an imperfect, because a partial, view. In order to understand these views, we need something more than a good memory. In order to make a pattern of Shakespeare criticism, we need to have some conception of the function of criticism. It is quite impossible to make anything of the history of Shakespeare criticism, unless we can come to some understanding of criticism in general. We have first to grasp what criticism is, and second to grasp the relation between literary and philosophical criticism on the one hand, and literary and textual criticism on the other. With the history of textual

criticism, with our increasing knowledge of Shakespeare, of his times, of his texts, of his theatre, I am not to be concerned; but I am concerned with (among other things) the general formulation of the relation between our literary criticism and our scholarly knowledge. In the history of the criticism of Shakespeare which is primarily or strictly literary and dramatic there is a certain "progress," but only such progress as is possible as a result of the improved texts, the increased knowledge about the conditions of the Elizabethan stage, about the life of Shakespeare himself, and about the times in which he lived. Otherwise, it would be imprudent to say that we are approximating towards a final goal of understanding, after which there will be nothing new to be said; or retrospectively, to assume that A. C. Bradley's criticism of Shakespeare is "better" than that of Dryden. Shakespeare criticism will always change as the world changes.

This point is really a very simple one, and easy to accept when our eye is on the history of criticism in general; but when we are confining our attention to the history of the criticism of a single great poet like Shakespeare, it is easy to slip into a different assumption. We find it difficult, of course, to believe that the view of Shakespeare to be taken 100 years hence can be very different from our own. On the other hand, we are inclined to assume that the criticism of Shakespeare written before the nineteenth century is less illuminating than that written since. Neither assumption is quite true. There is undeniably an aspect in which early criticism may be seen as the substructure of that of the nineteenth century. We have to admit that the fuller understanding of Shakespeare's greatness came slowly, just as it comes slowly, I believe, in the life of the individual reader. But Shakespeare criticism cannot be appreciated without some understanding of the time and of the place in which it is written, without allowing for its nearness or remoteness in place or time from the object, and for its inevitable development in the future. The views of Shakespeare taken by different men at different times in different places form an integral part of the development and change of European civilisation during the last 300 years. Furthermore, in this study we should, I think, take an attitude which is represented by the popular word *Gestalt* or, as we might say, "pattern." That is, we should not begin by the attempt to decide which Shakespeare critics are most illuminating, and ignore the rest; what we have to study is the whole pattern formed by Shakespeare criticism from his own time to ours. In tracing this pattern, certainly, we must study some critics more closely than others, and we may for practical purposes select certain critics who serve to determine

the main outline of the pattern; but it should be the whole pattern rather than the individual critic, in which we interest ourselves.

For this reason I shall not attempt, in this space, a compendious history of the subject. I shall simply select certain critics, according to the principle I have indicated above, and leave the reader to fill in the gaps by his own reading. There are obvious points of triangulation. First, there is the testimony of Shakespeare's contemporaries, of which, making due allowance for personal bias, that of Ben Jonson may be our specimen. Second, there is the criticism of the age of Dryden, regarding which, again, we make due allowance for the singular individual genius of Dryden. This is a period in which there is still a criticism of the *acted* play (as Pepys's *Diary* attests);[3] when – so far as the distinction holds – there is still dramatic as well as literary criticism; it is still a period in which criticism is directly in simple relation to the object, in contrast with modern criticism which is necessarily as much in relation to other criticism as to the work of Shakespeare itself. In the time of Pope and his contemporaries we feel at once the greater distance of time between the critic and the object, and we begin to feel that criticism has already to take account of criticism as well as of the object criticised. (This period, by the way, has been somewhat maligned: there is no period in which Shakespeare has not been treated with the greatest respect.) Against this, we must offset the critical views of the French in the eighteenth century, where we find, not so much the conflict of one dramatic type with another, as the conflict of English drama with a critical theory which was *not contradicted* by French practice. The French views of the eighteenth century – for example those of Voltaire, Diderot and La Harpe – have again to be compared with the other French views of the nineteenth century – as those of Taine and Victor Hugo.[4] Meanwhile we find English criticism modified, during the later part of the eighteenth century, by the development of the sentimental attitude. English criticism of the greater part of the nineteenth century is very largely a development from the work of Coleridge, Lamb, Hazlitt and De Quincey; amongst these the influence of Coleridge is very much the most significant; and the explanation of Coleridge is partly found in the German critical thought of the latter part of the eighteenth century.

The student of Shakespeare criticism will be aware of all these views and developments, will endeavour to appreciate their appropriateness each to its place and time, their relations to each other, their limitations of time and cultural sympathy, and will consequently recognise that at different

places and times criticism has different work to do. The contemporary of the poet has both obvious limitations and obvious advantages; he is too near to the object to see it clearly or in perspective; his judgment may be distorted by enthusiasm or prejudice; on the other hand he enjoys the advantage of a freshness unspoilt by generations of other men's views. The later critic has both to try to see the object as if for the first time, without the direction of the criticism which has intervened; and also, as I have said, previous criticism is itself a part of the object of his criticism. Hence the critic's problem becomes for every generation more complicated; but also, every generation has a better opportunity for realising how complicated the problem is. At one time, the critical task may be the elaboration of a kind of criticism already initiated; at another, its refutation; at another, the introduction of a new theory, that is to say the exposition of an aspect hitherto overlooked; or again, it may be to combine and to display the pattern afforded by the diverse voices. And in this Shakespeare pattern everything laudatory must find a place, when it is a true praise not previously sounded; and everything derogatory too, even when blunted by misunderstanding, so long as it evinces the temper of an age or a people, and not merely a personal whim.

Of the contemporary comment upon Shakespeare it is that of Ben Jonson which is best remembered and most quoted; and with justice, as Jonson not only had the finest critical mind of his day, but as a dramatist and poet is of so different a kind from Shakespeare that his opinion has a peculiar interest. We may incline to think that Shakespeare's contemporaries underestimated his accomplishment, and were blind to his genius; forgetting that greatness is in a sense the result of time. It has again and again been illustrated that the opinion of contemporaneity is imperfect; and that even when it shows intelligent appreciation and enjoyment, it is apt surprisingly to elevate some quite insignificant figure above a very great one. Our opinions of our own contemporaries will probably seem grotesque to the future. I believe that if I had lived in the seventeenth century, it is quite likely that I should have preferred Beaumont and Fletcher to Shakespeare; though my estimate of their difference to-day is enough to satisfy the most fanatical Shakespearian. What I wish to do is to remove the *stigma* of being a contemporary, and to deprecate the complacency which attaches to being a member of posterity.

And I certainly do not mean to confound all distinctions, or to allow easily all opinions to be right. Whenever Dryden mentions Shakespeare, Dryden's opinion must be treated with respect. To understand his view of

Shakespeare we must read *all* of his critical writing. And in particular, in weighing Dryden's opinions, we must spend some time over his collocation of Shakespeare and Fletcher, we must try to come to a point of understanding at which we *see* why it was natural and proper for him to make this frequent parallel and comparison. That is not so much a matter of wide reading or scholarship, although we must make ourselves very familiar with the plays of Fletcher, and with the plays, as well as the criticism, of Dryden: it is a matter of the exercise of the critical imagination. There are critics who are definitely wrong-headed. Thomas Rymer was a man of considerable learning, and not destitute of taste, when he left his taste to look after itself; but a false theory of what the drama should be, of what he *ought* to like, came very near to paralysing that function altogether, and made him the butt of his own and subsequent times.[5] Nevertheless, I believe that the falsity of his dramatic theory, and the absurdity of the conclusions he drew from it, have had the unfortunate effect – as the extremity of false theorising is apt to do – of sometimes confirming people in their own false opinions merely because they assured themselves too confidently that whatever Rymer did not believe must be right.

As soon as we enter the eighteenth century we feel a change in the atmosphere of criticism; and in reading the criticism itself we are aware that Shakespeare is beginning to be more read than seen upon the stage. Addison calls attention to a point of detail (the crowing of the cock in *Hamlet*) which has probably, we feel, struck him rather in the reading than at a performance;[6] the attention of the eighteenth-century critic in England is rather on the poetry than on the drama. The observations of Pope are of value and interest, because they are by Pope. If other eighteenth-century critics are to be read, it is not so much for their individual contributions, but as a reminder that there was no period in which Shakespeare fell into neglect. There is indeed some development. Shakespeare begins to be written about in greater detail and at greater length, and apart from any more general discussion of the drama; he is, in the eighteenth century, gradually *detached* from his environment, from the other dramatists, and from a time which had become unfamiliar. And it may be mentioned, though this is outside my province, that during the eighteenth century the standard of scholarship and editorship was rising. But the major part of eighteenth-century criticism down to Johnson, and almost all the French criticism of Shakespeare during this period, strike me as unprofitable reading unless we enlarge our interests. The criticism of Shakespeare at any epoch is a most

useful means of inducting us into the way in which people of that time enjoyed their contemporary poetry; and the approval which they express of Shakespeare indicates that he possessed some of the qualities that they cultivated in their own verse, and perhaps other qualities that they would have liked to find there. A study of the opinions of Voltaire, La Harpe and Diderot about Shakespeare may help to increase our appreciation of Racine; it is quite certain that we can never make head or tail of these opinions unless we do enjoy Corneille and Racine. And I do not mean merely a polite acquaintance with their plays, or a fluent ability to declaim their verse; I mean the immediate delight in their poetry. That is an experience which may arrive late in life, or oftener not at all; if it comes – I am speaking, of course, of Anglo-Saxon experience only – it is an illumination. And it is far from corrupting our pleasure in Shakespeare, or reducing our admiration. Poetry does not do these things to other poetry: the beauty of one kind only enhances the lustre of another.

To pass from Dryden to Johnson is to make the journey from one oasis to another. After the critical essays of Dryden, the Preface to Shakespeare by Samuel Johnson is the next of the great pieces of criticism to read. One would willingly resign the honour of an Abbey burial for the greater honour of words like the following, from a man of the greatness of their author:

> The poet, of whose works I have undertaken the revision, may now begin to assume the dignity of an ancient, and claim the privilege of established fame and prescriptive veneration. He has long outlived his century, the term commonly fixed as the test of literary merit. Whatever advantages he might once derive from personal allusions, local customs, or temporary opinions, have for many years been lost; and every topick of merriment, or motive of sorrow, which the modes of artificial life afforded him, now only obscure the scenes which they once illuminated. The effects of favour and competition are at an end; the tradition of his friendships and his enmities has perished; his works support no opinion with arguments, nor supply any faction with invectives; they can neither indulge vanity, nor gratify malignity; but are read without any other reason than the desire of pleasure, and are therefore praised only as pleasure is obtained; yet, thus unassisted by interest or passion, they have passed through variations of taste and changes of manners, and, as they devolved from one generation to another, have received new honours at every transmission.[7]

What a valedictory and obituary for any man to receive! My point is that if you assume that the classical criticism of England was grudging in its praise of Shakespeare, I say that no poet can ask more of posterity than to be greatly honoured by the great; and Johnson's words about Shakespeare are great honour.

Johnson refutes those critics – and only Johnson could do it – who had thought that Shakespeare violated propriety, here and there, with his observation that Shakespeare's "scenes are occupied only by men, who act and think as the reader thinks that he himself should have spoken or acted on the same occasion" [64]. But a little further Johnson makes another most remarkable (but not sufficiently remarked) observation, to which several subsequent editors and publishers, even to our own time, seem to have paid not sufficient deference:

> The players, who in their edition divided our author's works into comedies, histories, and tragedies, seem not to have defined the three kinds by any very exact or definite ideas. [68]

To those who would divide periods, and segregate men, neatly into classical and romantic groups, I commend the study of this sentence, and of what Johnson says afterwards about the relation of the tragic to the comic. This Preface to Shakespeare was published in 1765, and Voltaire, still writing ten years and more after this event, was maintaining an opposite point of view. Johnson saw deeper than Voltaire, in this as in most matters. Johnson perceived, though not explicitly, that the distinctions of tragic and comic are superficial – for *us*; though he did not know how important they were for the Greeks; for he did not know that they sprang from a difference in ritual. As a poet – and he was a fine poet – Johnson is at the end of a tether. But as a critic – and he was greater as critic than as poet – Johnson has a place comparable to that of Cowley as poet: in that we cannot say whether to classify him as the last of one kind or the first of another. There is one sentence which we may boggle over. Johnson says:

> In tragedy he (*i.e.* Shakespeare) often writes, with great appearance of toil and study, what is written at last with little felicity; but, in his comic scenes, he seems to produce, without labour, what no labour can improve. [69]

This is an opinion which we cannot lightly dismiss. Johnson is quite aware that the alternation of "tragic" and "comic" is something more than

an alternation; he perceives that something different and new is produced. "The interchanges of mingled scenes seldom fail to produce the intended vicissitudes of passion" [67]. "*Through all these denominations of the drama Shakespeare's mode of composition is the same*" [68; TSE's italics]. But why should Johnson have thought that Shakespeare's comic parts were spontaneous, and that his tragic parts were laboured? Here, it seems to me, Johnson, by his simple integrity, in being wrong has happened upon some truth much deeper than he knew. For to those who have experienced the full horror of life, tragedy is still inadequate. Sophocles felt more of it than he could express, when he wrote *Oedipus the King*; Shakespeare, when he wrote *Hamlet*;[8] and Shakespeare had the advantage of being able to employ his grave-diggers. In the end, horror and laughter may be one – only when horror and laughter have become as horrible and laughable as they can be; and – whatever the conscious intention of the authors – you may laugh or shudder over *Oedipus* or *Hamlet* or *King Lear* – or both at once: then only do you perceive that the aim of the comic and the tragic dramatist is the same: they are equally serious. So do the meanings of words change, as we inspect them, that we may even come to see Molière in some lights as a more serious dramatist than Corneille or Racine; Wycherley as equally serious (in this sense) with Marlowe. All this is suggested to me by the words of Samuel Johnson which I have quoted. What Plato perceived has not been noticed by subsequent dramatic critics; the dramatic poet uses the conventions of tragic and comic poetry, so far as these are the conventions of his day; there is potential comedy in Sophocles and potential tragedy in Aristophanes, and otherwise they would not be such good tragedians or comedians as they are. It might be added that when you have comedy and tragedy united in the wrong way, or separated in the wrong way, you get sentiment or amusement. The distinction between the tragic and the comic is an account of the way in which we try to live; when we get below it, as in *King Lear*, we have an account of the way in which we do live.

The violent change between one period and another is both progress and retrogression. I have quoted only a few sentences from Johnson's Preface to Shakespeare; but I think they represent the view of a mature, if limited, personality. The next phase of English criticism of Shakespeare is prefaced from Germany. I must add, however, that the influence of German criticism upon English at this point can easily be exaggerated. It is in no wise to belittle the value of this criticism, if we affirm that there was rather a similarity of outlook, and a natural sympathy between the German and

the English mind, in approaching Shakespeare, which we do not find with the French critics. It would be rash to assert that the German mind is better qualified to appreciate Shakespeare than is the French; but one less comprehensive generalisation I believe can be made. For the French mind, the approach to Shakespeare has normally been by way of a comparison to Corneille and Racine, if not to Molière. Now for the Frenchman the plays of his classical age are primarily, to this day, plays to be acted; and his memories of them are of the theatre at least as much as of the library. For the Englishman of the nineteenth century the plays of Shakespeare have been dramatic poems to be read, rather than plays to be seen; and for most of us to-day the great majority of the plays are solely literary acquaintances. Furthermore, the French have always had this background of their own great dramatic achievement. But the Germans have never had this background of native authority in the drama; their acquaintance with Shakespeare was formed in the study; and until the reputation of Goethe was firmly established throughout Europe they had no native dramatic author with whom to compare him. For these reasons alone, without any rash generalisations about the Gallic and the Teutonic mind, we should expect the German attitude to be more sympathetic.

But the kind of criticism which arises rather from reading than from attendance at the theatre arose in England spontaneously. The first striking example of this sort of criticism, a remarkable piece of writing which deserves meditation, and which commands our respect whether we agree with its conclusions or not, is Morgann's *Essay On the Dramatic Character of Sir John Falstaff* (1777). For the case which Morgann attempts to make out, I refer the reader to Morgann himself.[9] My point is that Morgann's essay is the first conspicuous member of a long line of criticism dealing with the characters of the personages in the plays, considering not only their actions within the play itself, but inferring from their behaviour on the stage what their general character is, that is to say, how they would behave in other circumstances. This is a perfectly legitimate form of criticism, though liable to abuses; at its best, it can add very much to our enjoyment of the moments of the characters' life which are given in the scene, if we feel this richness of reality in them; and at its worst, it becomes an irrelevance and distracts us from our enjoyment of the play.

The first of the great German critics, Lessing, tended to make of Shakespeare almost a national issue, for he it was who affirmed that English literature, and in particular Shakespeare, was more congenial than French

literature and drama to the German taste. The German critics in general insist upon the naturalness and fidelity to reality of Shakespeare's plays. Herder, a critic of considerable understanding, begins to appreciate the existence of something like a poetic pattern, in calling attention to the fitness between the passions of the personages and the scenery in which these passions are enacted. But what interests me in this place is not a detailed valuation of the opinions of the German critics of this period – not even the opinions of the Schlegels and Goethe – but a consideration of the general tendency of their opinions.[10] Neglecting the circumstances in which the plays were written – and indeed the historical information was not available – and paying little attention to their dramatic merits, the Germans concentrated their attention chiefly upon the philosophical significance of character. They penetrate to a deeper level than that of the simple moral values attributed to great literature by earlier times, and foreshadow the "criticism of life" definition by Arnold.[11] Furthermore, it is not until this period that an element of "mystery" is recognised in Shakespeare. That is one of the gifts of the Romantic Movement to Shakespeare criticism, and one for which, with all its excesses, we have reason to be grateful. It is hardly too much to say that the German critics and Coleridge, by their criticism of Shakespeare, radically altered the reflective attitude of criticism towards poetry.

The writings of Coleridge upon Shakespeare must be read entire; for it is impossible to understand Shakespeare criticism to this day, without a familiar acquaintance with Coleridge's lectures and notes. Coleridge is an authority of the kind whose influence extends equally towards good and bad. It would be unjust to father upon him, without further ceremony, the psycho-analytic school of Shakespeare criticism; the study of individual characters which was begun by Morgann, to the neglect of the pattern and meaning of the whole play, was bound to lead to some such terminus, and we do not blame Morgann for that. But when Coleridge released the truth that Shakespeare already in *Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece* gave proof of a "most profound, energetic and *philosophic* mind" he was perfectly right, if we use these adjectives rightly, but he supplied a dangerous stimulant to the more adventurous.[12] "Philosophic" is of course not the right word, but it cannot simply be erased: you must find another word to put in its place, and the word has not yet been found. The sense of the profundity of Shakespeare's "thought," or of his thinking-in-images, has so oppressed some critics that they have been forced to explain themselves by unintelligibles.

I have not spoken of Hazlitt, Lamb and De Quincey; that is because I wished to isolate Coleridge as perhaps the greatest single figure in Shakespeare criticism down to the present day. In a conspectus like the present, only the most salient points can be more than mentioned; and Hazlitt, Lamb and De Quincey, for my present purposes, do but make a constellation about the primary star of Coleridge. Their work is chiefly important as reinforcing the influence of Coleridge; though De Quincey's *Knocking on the Gate in Macbeth* is perhaps the best known single piece of criticism of Shakespeare that has been written.[13] But for the student of Shakespeare criticism, the writing of all of these men is among those documents that are to be read, and not merely read about.

NOTES

1. As printed in *A Companion to Shakespeare Studies*, ed. Harley Granville-Barker and G. B. Harrison (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1934), 287-99. In the collection of fifteen essays, "Shakespearian Criticism" was a two-part subject, with J. Isaacs contributing "II. From Coleridge to the Present Day" (300-24).

2. Augustus John Ralli, *A History of Shakespearian Criticism*, 2 vols (London: Oxford UP, 1932). Ralli, author and FRSL (1875-1954), states in the preface that the volumes aim "to follow the aesthetic opinion on Shakespeare from his own time to the end of 1925 in England, France, and Germany" [v].

3. In his entry for 24 Aug 1661, Samuel Pepys describes a performance of *Hamlet*, "done with scenes very well, but above all, Betterton did the prince's part beyond imagination"; on 1 Mar 1661-62, Pepys witnessed Betterton in *Romeo and Juliet*, "the first time it was ever acted [after the post-Restoration opening of the theaters]; but it is a play the worst acted that ever I saw these people do, and I am resolved to go no more to see the first time acting, for they were all of them out more or less." *The Diary of Samuel Pepys*, ed. Henry B. Wheatley (London: George Bell and Sons, 1893).

4. In vol 1 of his examination of eighteenth-century French criticism (1717-99) in *A History of Shakespearian Criticism*, Ralli finds "little that satisfies" in Diderot, particularly in his dismissal of *Hamlet* as "a mixture of tragedy and burlesque, dangerous to imitate" (47). On the other hand, Ralli observes that "Voltaire calls him a great, uncontrolled, adventurous genius, great despite his faults," faults that are "most emphasized by Voltaire and La Harpe, and to Voltaire's repeated charges of bad art and bad taste, La Harpe adds extravagance, improbability, and caricature instead of portrait painting" (55-56). In the later period (1863-73), Hippolyte Taine is shown to bestow lavish praise on Shakespeare as "an all-powerful, excessive master of the sublime as well as the base, the most creative mind that ever occupied itself with the details of actual life. . . . All came from within, little from circumstances" (455), while to Victor Hugo, writes Ralli, "Shakespeare has equals but no superior. He is very English, almost too English. He gives to England the disinterested greatness that she otherwise lacks . . . he is the free poet of a prudish nation. He may be equaled but never surpassed; and whoever would equal him must provide for the needs of his age as Shakespeare did for his own" (462).

5. Thomas Rymer, a staunch proponent of maintaining the classical rules, unities, and choruses of ancient tragedy, is remembered in Shakespearean criticism for his attack on Shakespeare's dramaturgy, and particularly *Othello*, in his *A Short View of Tragedy* (1693), in which he asserts that "the foundation of the Play must be concluded to be Monstrous; And the constitution, all over, to be most rank," and concludes that "the tragical part is, plainly none other, than a Bloody Farce, without salt or savour." See *The Critical Works of Thomas Rymer*, ed. Curt Zimansky (New Haven: Yale UP, 1956), 132-64.

6. In *The Tatler* of 24 Dec 1709, Joseph Addison, writing on Christmas Eve of the passage spoken by Marcellus (I.i.157-64), praised the "religious veneration" insinuated by Shakespeare in citing the tradition of the cock crowing all night at Christmas time to celebrate the birth of Christ, and his "agreeable wildness of imagination" in having "wrought a country tradition into a beautiful piece of poetry." See *The Tatler*, ed. George A. Aitken, vol 2 (London: Duckworth, 1899), 406. TSE acknowledged to John Hayward that the ending of "Little Gidding II" – "And faded on the blowing of the horn" – is an allusion to the ghost of Hamlet's father, who "faded on the crowing of the cock." Helen Gardner, *The Composition of "Four Quartets"* (London: Faber & Faber, 1978), 196.

7. "Preface to Shakespeare, 1765," *The Yale Edition of the Works of Samuel Johnson*, vol 7, ed. Arthur Sherbo (New Haven: Yale UP, 1968), 61; subsequent citations in the text are to this edition.

8. In "Hamlet," TSE wrote: "Hamlet (the man) is dominated by an emotion which is inexpressible, because it is in excess of the facts as they appear. And the supposed identity of Hamlet with his author is genuine to this point: that Hamlet's bafflement at the absence of objective equivalent to his feelings is a prolongation of the bafflement of his creator in the face of his artistic problem" (2.125).

9. In *An Essay on the Dramatic Character of Sir John Falstaff*, the Shakespearean scholar Maurice Morgann (1726-1802) defended Falstaff as an admirable man of courage against Samuel Johnson's depiction of him as a drunken coward; Morgann's analytical approach inspired the character studies of subsequent Shakespeareans, including A. C. Bradley.

10. In vol 1 of *A History of Shakespearian Criticism*, Ralli examines the first period (1767-1813) of German critics, including G. E. Lessing (1729-81), J. G. von Herder, A. W. von Schlegel (1767-1845), Friedrich von Schlegel (1772-1829), and Goethe. The "prevailing impression" of their work, Ralli writes, is of Shakespeare's "width, freedom, universality, reality. He was nature's interpreter – and the unities were irksome bonds to him. . . . That his wider subject matter required deeper art is also recognized – and specially emphasized by Herder and the Schlegels. Nearly all admit his mastery of character and passion. . . . Both the Schlegels describe him as 'romantic' – which Goethe denies. . . . Goethe's saying that he was religious-minded but affected no particular creed is still the best of its kind. // The final impression from the collected German critics differs from the English and French. It is less literary and more philosophic; it hints at a science of human nature. It uses art and characterization as the servants of abstract knowledge" (124-25).

11. In "A Note on the American Critic," TSE had earlier taken issue with this phrase of Arnold's (2.289).

12. From Coleridge's "Shakespeare as a Poet Generally," in section I, "Poetry, the Drama, and Shakespeare," in TSE's copy of the New Universal Library edition of *Lectures and Notes on*

Shakespeare and Other Dramatists (London: George Routledge, [1908]): "Finally, in this poem [*Venus and Adonis*] and the *Rape of Lucrece*, Shakespeare gave ample proof of his possession of a most profound, energetic, and philosophical mind, without which he might have pleased, but could not have been a great dramatic poet" (47).

13. In "On the Knocking at the Gate in *Macbeth*" (1823), De Quincey explains his lifelong attempt to comprehend the effect on him ("a peculiar awfulness and a depth of solemnity") of the knocking that follows the murder of Duncan. The knocking announces, he comes to believe, a reaction against suspended life and passion: "Hence it is, that when the deed is done . . . the knocking at the gate is heard; and it makes known audibly that the reaction has commenced; the human has made its reflux upon the fiendish; the pulses of life are beginning to beat again; and the re-establishment of the goings-on of the world in which we live, first makes us profoundly sensible of the awful parenthesis that had suspended them." *De Quincey's Literary Criticism*, ed. H. Darbishire (London: Henry Frowde, 1909), 149.

A Commentary

The Criterion: A Literary Review, 13 (Apr 1934) 451-54

I have been reading (it is not a new book, for it was published in 1931) the *Évocations: Souvenirs 1905-1911* of our friend Henri Massis.[1] The book should be, for anybody, an interesting and valuable document upon a period; but [it] has a more personal interest for me, inasmuch as M. Massis is my contemporary, and the period of which he writes includes the time of my own brief residence in Paris. I remember the appearance of M. Massis's first conspicuous piece of writing; though I was ignorant at the time, as were most people, that the "Agathon" who attacked the New Sorbonne was a name covering the joint authorship of Henri Massis and Alfred de Tarde.[2] At the beginning of his reminiscences Massis quotes from Péguy: "*Je vais fonder un parti*, le parti des hommes de quarante ans. *Vous en serez aussi, mon garçon. Un jour, vous serez mûr*" [1].[3] I wonder whether we should make that prediction, with equal assurance, to our juniors to-day.

Younger generations can hardly realize the intellectual desert of England and America during the first decade and more of this century. In the English desert, to be sure, flourished a few tall and handsome cactuses, as well as James and Conrad (for whom the climate, in contrast to their own, was relatively favourable); in America the desert extended, *à perte de vue*, without the least prospect of even desert vegetables. The predominance of Paris was incontestable. Poetry, it is true, was somewhat in eclipse; but there was a most exciting variety of ideas. Anatole France and Remy de Gourmont still exhibited their learning, and provided types of scepticism for younger men to be attracted by and to repudiate; Barrès was at the height of his influence, and of his rather transient reputation. Péguy, more or less Bergsonian *and* Catholic *and* Socialist, had just become important, and the young were further distracted by Gide and Claudel. Vildrac, Romains, Duhamel, experimented with verse which seemed hopeful, though it was always, I think, disappointing; something was expected of Henri Franck, the early deceased author of *La Danse devant l'arche*.[4] At the Sorbonne, Faguet was an authority to be attacked violently; the sociologists, Durkheim, Lévy-Bruhl, held new doctrines; Janet was the great psychologist; at the Collège de France, Loisy enjoyed his somewhat scandalous distinction;

and over all swung the spider-like figure of Bergson. His metaphysic was said to throw some light upon the new ways of painting, and discussion of Bergson was apt to be involved with discussion of Matisse and Picasso.[5]

I am willing to admit that my own retrospect is touched by a sentimental sunset, the memory of a friend coming across the Luxembourg Gardens in the late afternoon, waving a branch of lilac, a friend who was later (so far as I could find out) to be mixed with the mud of Gallipoli.[6] And I know that like all other periods, this period does boil down. Nevertheless, it seems to me that it did provide for the young such experiences as justified Péguy's prediction, "*un jour, vous serez mûr*." To-day, such words seem to read like a counsel of perfection. Our occupation with immediate social, political and economic issues to-day is a necessity, but a regrettable one; for it tends to abbreviate and confuse that period of adolescence in which a man is acquiring understanding by submitting himself, in a leisurely way, to one intellectual influence after another. I know that for some natures the diversity of influences of Paris in those days – a real diversity, not merely a division into political groups – was too strong: the gentle Jacques Rivière fell a victim to the opposing forces of Gide and Claudel, and never could make up his mind. Péguy had the ability to combine a variety of doctrines by a force of imagination which sometimes concealed and usually atoned for incoherence. Some, like Ernest Psichari, seem too facile a result of some such formula as: Charles de Foucauld *plus* Rudyard Kipling.[7] But an atmosphere of diverse opinions seems to me on the whole favourable to the maturing of the individual; because when he does come to a conviction, he does so not by "taking a ticket," but by making up his own mind.

There is something to be said, in these days, for individualism. I do not mean what ordinarily passes by that name, simply a party of folk huddling together to be independent in company. Most "individualists," I dare say, have never held an opinion contrary to that of the other members of their small immediate society, nor have ever gone into the wilderness for the purpose of making up their minds. A number of eminent Liberals of all three parties have recently signed a manifesto in favour of "democratic" government. I have considerable sympathy with them, with reference to the recent developments which cause them alarm; but I cannot feel that their convictions are fundamental enough to cut much ice; and the juvenile enthusiasm of their opponents may only be heated to a higher degree by such pronouncements. To surrender individual judgment to a Church is a hard thing; to surrender individual responsibility to a party is, for many men, a pleasant

stimulant and sedative. And those who have once experienced this sweet intoxication are not easily brought back to the difficult path of thinking for themselves, and of respecting their own person and that of others.

The intellectual primacy of Paris is not what it was in the days of which I have been speaking; and I cannot expect Paris to mean for young people now what it meant for us *quadragénaires*.[8] But the very failure of the recent disturbances goes to indicate, amongst other things less hopeful to contemplate, that the French are still individual human beings. There was an emotional upheaval of indignant citizens, who, in order to demonstrate at all, had to sort themselves out into half a dozen warring groups, occasionally united against the police and military; just as in 1910 I remember the *camelots* cheering the *cuirassiers* who were sent to disperse them, because they represented the Army, all the time that they were trying to stampede their horses.[9] Perhaps France will be the last country to be conquered by the mob. A good deal has been said, more by Frenchmen than by foreigners, of journalistic corruption; but perhaps something is to be said for a variety of corruption, if you have newspapers enough, as against uniformity of control in a few hands.

Let us therefore say a word for diversity of opinion. What ultimately matters is the salvation of the individual soul. You may not like this principle; but if you abjure it, you will probably in the end get something that you like less. The world tends now to scramble for its salvation by taking a ticket.

The effort of some of the younger men of letters in Paris – I have in mind the groups of *Esprit*, *L'Ordre nouveau*, *L'Homme nouveau*, and more isolated writers like Thierry Maulnier – show a valuable determination not to surrender individuality to any of the prevailing tendencies of the hour, at the same time that they avoid the Liberalism that still practises its shrill choruses in England.[10] We hope to keep in touch with such current thought in France, and present it from time to time to our readers.

T.S.E.

NOTES

1. Paris: Plon, 1931. TSE's copy of Massis's *Évocations* contains the inscription: "à T. S. Eliot / son ami / Henri Massis / qui n'a plus le temps d'écrire des souvenirs / novembre 1933"; *trans*: to T. S. Eliot / his friend / Henri Massis / who no longer has the time to record memories / November 1933.

TSE had published Massis's "The Defence of the West" in the *Criterion* (Apr-June 1926), a copy of which he sent to his mother on 13 June: "The article by Henri Massis proved to be the most popular in the last number. He is one of the royalist and neo-catholic group as are in fact

most of my friends in Paris" (*L3* 187). Their friendship began after they met at a dinner party in Paris later that month in the company of Charles Maurras, Jacques Maritain, and Léon Daudet (*L3* 198n).

2. Jean Bertrand Alfred de Tarde (1880-1925), journalist and son of sociologist Gabriel de Tarde. Both Alfred de Tarde and Massis were associated with the neo-Thomist, Catholic revival in France. Their "first conspicuous" appearance under the pseudonym of Agathon (a Greek poet who appears in Plato's *Symposium*) was their severe critique of Bergson, which appeared in two right-wing papers in 1910. Here though, TSE refers to Agathon's *L'Esprit de la nouvelle Sorbonne* (1911), which denounced the recently imposed reforms at the Sorbonne, reforms which promoted German vocational training over the French classical tradition. TSE was a student at the Sorbonne in 1910-11, where he attended lectures by Bergson, later including him in a lecture on "The Philosophy of 1910" in his 1916 Extension course on Modern French Literature (1.475).

3. *Trans*: "I am going to found a party, the party of forty-year-olds; you will be in it too, my boy. One day, you will be mature." TSE's citation has here been corrected to Massis's punctuation, though Massis's quotation condenses several paragraphs from the final pages of Péguy's *Victor-Marie, Comte Hugo*.

4. *La Danse devant l'arche* appeared in 1912, the year of Franck's death.

5. Many of these authors whom Eliot mentions – Faguet, Loisy, Bergson, France, Barrès, Péguy, and Claudel – were discussed in, or placed on, the reading list of his "Syllabus of a Course of Six Lectures on Modern French Literature" (1.471-77). TSE's "Reflections on *Vers Libre*" begins with an epigraph from Duhamel and Vildrac's *Notes sur la technique poétique* (1.511).

6. TSE dedicated *Prufrock and Other Observations* (1917) to his friend Jean Verdenal. As the expanded dedication (1925) indicates, Verdenal died "aux Dardanelles," the strait dividing the Gallipoli peninsula from Asia Minor.

7. Ernest Psichari (1883-1914), author, soldier, Catholic convert, and favorite of French nationalists. His ardent love of church and army contrasted notably with the anticlerical ideas of his grandfather, Ernest Renan. In this same edition of the *Criterion* (Apr 1934), TSE published Thomas MacGreevy's review of Henriette Psichari's biography of her brother, *Ernest Psichari, mon frère*.

Charles de Foucauld (1858-1916) was a French Algerian officer and, later, Cistercian priest. For Eliot's later tribute to Charles de Foucauld, see 5.625-28.

8. Aged between forty and forty-nine.

9. *Camelots*: Fédération nationale des Camelots du Roi. Created in 1908 to sell the newspaper of the Action Française, these "Hucksters of the King" were a youth group known for its disruptive street tactics. *Cuirassiers*: cavalry of the French army.

10. A member of the Action Française from his youth, Thierry Maulnier (pseudonym of Jacques Talagrand, 1909-88) was a right-wing author and, later, playwright. Maulnier's books were regularly noted in Montgomery Belgion's "French Chronicle" for the *Criterion*.

The nonconformist political movement known as the Ordre Nouveau was founded by Alexandre Marc and others in 1930. The ensuing decade saw a proliferation of nonconformist reviews in France, which included *L'Homme nouveau*, *L'Ordre nouveau*, and the most well known, *Esprit*.

Mr. T. S. Eliot's Quandaries

To the Editor of *The New English Weekly*

The New English Weekly, 4 (12 Apr 1934) 622-23

Sir, – Wishing to engross as little of your space as may be, I shall try to comment upon Mr. Pound's observations (558) and your own notes (576) briefly in one letter.[1]

First, I suggest to Mr. Pound that the review mentioned in the *Observer* is definitely below the level of "average London intelligence." I do not know how to prove this.[2]

Mr. Pound does not make clear to me what *is* the peculiar malady of my logic. I should like to know. Naturally, *if* my diagnosis is wrong, my remedy is likely to be an irrelevance.[3]

I had no intention of distracting my readers from the vital problem of economics; and Mr. Pound's objection seems to depend upon the assumption that this is the *only* vital problem.[4]

I still do not know whether Mr. Pound means, by "ecclesiastical bureaucrats," the whole of the Anglican and Roman hierarchies, or not. Is the Pope, for instance, a bureaucrat according to Mr. Pound's definition?[5]

Mr. Pound has now re-written the paragraph which stands as the last but one on page 559, in such a way that I cannot only understand it but agree with what it asserts. I thought that this was what he meant; but only goodwill could supply the interpretation.[6]

Now, Sir, as to your notes.[7] Our difficulties seem to turn primarily upon the use of words in different senses. As for (1) I apologise for having overlooked your previous comment upon the Archbishop of York's letter. (2) I find that you mean by *native* something like what I mean by *eternal*. I find it hard to dissociate the meaning of the adjective *native* from the process of *birth*. A "Whitstable native" is surely an oyster which was born at or in the vicinity of Whitstable, even though of American parentage.[8] (3) As for the Atonement, Sir, you might consult, among others, the essay on the subject by Dr. Kirk in *Essays Catholic and Critical*.[9] (4) However admirable may be "a classless but functional society distinguished only by objective merits," it seems to me only a *means* to the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth, not that Kingdom itself. (5) Again, we differ as to the possible meanings of the word

mission. A mission is an *errand*. The extension of the meaning to cover what is actually accomplished should be made clear in its context. (6) I suspect that by "saving souls" you mean "creating a divine society of Man on Earth" (whatever you may mean by divine). In other words, where you put *complementary*, you mean *identical*?

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. "Mr. Eliot's Quandaries," *NEW*, 4 (29 Mar 1934), 558-59; the editor's responses to TSE's letter of 29 Mar are reproduced in note 7 below.

2. "The danger of Mr. Eliot's reprint is amply illustrated by the efflux in the 'Observer' which can be taken, I suppose, as gauge of 'average' London intelligence?" (558). Basil de Selincourt's review of *After Strange Gods*, "A New Cure for the Times: Mr. Eliot and Orthodoxy," appeared in the *Observer* of 4 Mar 1934, 5.

3. "His being surprised [at Pound's mention of the "average man"] is, however, useful, as it sheds light on a peculiar malady of his logic. . . . Mr. Eliot is not treating a specific literary problem; he is treating the modern world. . . . He is in fact treating the sickness of the age. His diagnosis is wrong. His remedy is an irrelevance" (559).

4. "Mr. Eliot's book is pernicious in that it distracts the reader from a vital problem (economic justice)" (559).

5. "A bureaucrat (ecclesiastical or any other god damn'd variety) is a man in a safe or safeish job whose mental attitude is coloured by his wish to retain that job, often to such a degree that the truth becomes of secondary or tertiary importance to him, and the translating of the concept of justice into action seems to him impractical, or infinitely deferable" (559).

6. In Pound's review of *ASG*, he had written: "I am asserting a known and established fact: when religion was real the church concerned itself with vital phenomena in ECONOMICS" ("Mr. Eliot's Mare's Nest," *NEW*, 4 [8 Mar 1934], 500). Of this passage, TSE had complained: "If Mr. Pound would rewrite paragraph 9 in Basic English, avoiding phrases like 'when religion was real' and 'vital phenomena,' it might possibly turn out to be a statement which I could accept" (5.63). Pound obliged: "During those centuries when organised Christianity, namely, the Roman Catholic Church, was most active in the life of Europe, both in affairs spiritual and in affairs temporal, during those Ages when religious verbal manifestations in Europe reached their most admirable heights, whether in the writing of Scotus Erigena, Albertus de la Magna, Aquinas, Francis of Assisi, Dante himself; and when ecclesiastical architecture triumphed in San Zeno, St. Hilaire, the Duomo of Modena and an infinite number of churches, the CHURCH had not abrogated her right to dissociate ECONOMIC right from Economic evil" (559).

7.

(1) What this paper thinks of the Archbishop of York's proposals was clearly stated in our issue of March 15. ["Notes of the Week," *NEW*, 4 (15 Mar 1934), 507]. As between a release of money for consumption and a release of money for investment, we have no hesitation in supporting the Archbishop, though the choice, as we pointed out, is mainly sentimental.

(2) The prayer that Thy Kingdom Come [in the future] on Earth as it is [present] in Heaven is evidence of the priority of the "native condition" over its terrestrial actualisation. [brackets in *NEW*]

(3) The Atonement was surely not confined to the laying down of life, but extended to the whole Life.

(4) By the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth we mean a classless but functional society distinguished only by objective merits.

(5) The ideal mission is the Founder's aim; the actual mission is the object in fact effected. E.g., the ideal mission of Lenin was the dictatorship of the proletariat; the actual mission of Leninism has become the creation of a Russian bourgeoisie. The ideal mission, again, of the Church was the realisation of the Kingdom of Heaven upon Earth; its actual mission is at least in danger of becoming only its own self-preservation.

(6) Saving souls and creating a divine society of Man on Earth are complementary. One without the other is impossible.

(7) "Pose" and "sense," we agree, are inexcusable even in unrevised writing.– ED. *N.E.W.*

8. Whitstable, a seaside town in Kent, is renowned for its oysters. TSE wrote to Virginia Woolf from Harvard on 5 Mar 1933: "if I had been invited here one year earlier and were back in England now consuming a dozen of Whitstable Natives and a Pint of Guinness I should be heaps happier."

9. Kenneth Escott Kirk (1886-1954), then Regius Professor of Moral and Pastoral Theology at Oxford, contributed "The Atonement" to *Essays Catholic and Critical* (London: S.P.C.K., 1926), edited by Edward Gordon Selwyn. TSE read this collection of essays in Mar 1927 in preparation for his conversion (*L3* 437).

Modern Heresies

To the Editor of *The New English Weekly*

The New English Weekly, 5 (3 May 1934) 71-72

Sir, – There appears to be left one matter upon which Mr. Pound and I do not agree: namely, the vital problem of what is and what is not blue china. Let Mr. Pound dust his own blue china and let me potter about with mine.[1]

Incidentally, the personalities of Mr. Chesterton and Dean Inge, and Mr. Pound's lack of respect for them, seem to me to be totally irrelevant.[2]

I am not convinced that my own concern for the future of society, in England A.D. 1934, is any less than that of Mr. Pound in Italy *anno* 12.[3] On the contrary, as Mr. Pound is not interested in the survival of the Christian Faith, his demands upon the future are much more likely to be satisfied than are mine. And this is the point, and indeed the only point for me of embarking upon or pursuing this correspondence. It is only a step from asserting (what appears to be true) that the economic problem must be solved if civilisation is to survive, to asserting (what I dispute) that all other problems may be or ought to be neglected until the solution of the economic problem. And from this point it is only one step more into complete Secularism. The political alternatives which we are offered as alternatives to the present rotten state of affairs both seem to me wholly secular. The reason why I have been able to support the *New English Weekly* is that the doctrines it advocates do not appear to be necessarily and exclusively secular. The kind of fanaticism which Mr. Pound applies to economic reforms with which I am, in any case, in sympathy, and which he applies in a different sense to a religious institution of which I am a member, seems to me to degrade the former, and to leave the latter unaffected.

Mr. Pound has been kind enough to inform me about the works of Alberto de la Magna, the Collection Migne, and Larousse.[4] I may recommend in return a small pamphlet, *Le bien commun*, published by Desclée de Brouwer et Cie., fr. 2.50. I have also found *Le meilleur régime politique selon S. Thomas* (Marcel Demongeot) and *Fragments de sociologie chrétienne*

(Tristan d'Athayde) of some interest. I have no doubt that he is already familiar with *Quadragesimo Anno*.[5]

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. Pound wrote in his letter "Mr. Eliot's Quandaries," printed in the *NEW* of 26 Apr 1934: "I would not stop to discuss blue china in the midst of a cholera epidemic if I possessed means to combat the epidemic, and, in the present circumstances, I consider certain kinds of aesthetic discussion on a par with such a course" (48).

2. "Perhaps the measure of religious degradation in England in our time may be measured by the fact that Chesterton is the most vocal Catholic, and Inge the noisiest and most persistent verbal manifester of the Anglicans" (48).

3. The *Era fascista* (Fascist Era) was used in Italy between 1922 and 1943 as an alternative calendar system to that of the Christian calendar, so that Anno EF XII or "Fascist Era Year 12," meaning twelve years since the March on Rome on 28 Oct 1922, denotes 1934 in the Christian calendar.

4. "I refer Mr. Eliot to Migne's collection of the early Church Fathers, the 'Encyclopedia Britannica' or Larousse and/or any passable history of the Church" (48). The Dominican friar and bishop Albertus Magnus (1193/1206-1280), also known as Albert the Great and Albert of Cologne, achieved fame for his erudition. His writings, collected in 1899, cover such topics as logic, theology, botany, geography, astronomy, and mineralogy. Dante meets him and his pupil Thomas Aquinas in *Paradiso* X.98-99. TSE referred to Migne's 221-volume *Patrologiae cursus completus* (1844-64) in his third Clark Lecture (2.652) and in "If I Were a Dean" (4.298). The *Grand dictionnaire universel du XIX^e^ siècle* (1866-76) [Great Universal Dictionary of the 19th Century] is a French encyclopedic dictionary planned, directed and published by Pierre Larousse (1817-75).

5. The manifesto *Pour le bien commun. Les Responsabilités du chrétien et le moment présent* (Paris: Desclée, De Brouwer et Cie, 1934) was drafted by Jacques Maritain in collaboration with Yves Simon, Olivier Lacombe, Maurice de Gandillac, Étienne Borne and Étienne Gilson. TSE later drew on Marcel Demongeot's book *Le Meilleur Régime politique selon saint Thomas* (Paris: André Blot, 1928) in *The Idea of a Christian Society* and quoted from it in "A Sub-Pagan Society?" (1939) (5.753); the Brazilian writer Tristan d'Athayde (pseudonym of Alceu Amoroso Lima; 1893-1983), an opponent of totalitarianism and Fascism, wrote *Fragments de sociologie chrétienne*, trans. from the Portuguese by Jean Duriau and Georges Raeders (Paris: Desclée, De Brouwer et Cie, 1934), in the series "Questions disputées" directed by Charles Journet and Jacques Maritain. In the encyclical *Quadragesimo anno* (Latin for "In the 40th Year"), issued on 15 May 1931, forty years after Leo XIII's *Rerum novarum*, Pope Pius XI offers a critique of socialism and capitalism, insisting that the social and economic order must be founded on ethical principles that preserve human freedom while avoiding extreme individualism.

Prefatory Note to *The Rock: A Pageant Play . . . Book of Words by T. S. Eliot*.[1]

London: Faber & Faber, 1934. Pp. 86; Prefatory Note [5]; together with *"The Story of the Pageant," and Foreword on the Play by T. S. Eliot and Martin Browne. Sadler's Wells Theatre Programme for The Rock, May 28th-June 9th, 1934* [London: Sadler's Wells] [7].

I cannot consider myself the author of the "play," but only of the words which are printed here.[2] The scenario, incorporating some historical scenes suggested by the Rev. R. Webb Odell, is by E. Martin Browne, under whose direction I wrote the choruses and dialogues, and submissive to whose expert criticism I rewrote much of them.[3] Of only one scene am I literally the author: for this scene and of course for the sentiments expressed in the choruses I must assume the responsibility.

I should like to make grateful acknowledgment of the collaboration of Dr. Martin Shaw, who composed the music. To Mr. F. V. Morley I am indebted for one speech for which technical knowledge of bricklaying was required; to Major Bonamy Dobrée for correcting the diction of the Christopher Wren scene; to Mr. N. F. Cachemaille-Day for information concerning the relations of architects, contractors and foremen. The Rev. Vincent Howson has so completely rewritten, amplified and condensed the dialogue between himself ("Bert") and his mates, that he deserves the title of joint author.[4]

T. S. E.

April 1934

* * * *

THE STORY OF THE PAGEANT

The Rock is not a pageant in the usual sense. It does not consist of a number of historical scenes or tableaux in order of time. The aim is not merely to remind people that churches have been built in the past, but to employ the historical scenes to reinforce, in appropriate places, the emphasis upon the needs of the present.

The direct action of the play is concerned with the efforts and difficulties of a group of bricklayers engaged in building a modern church. At the beginning of the play they are seen working upon the foundations; later the half-built church is shown. When the builders have finished, decorators of various kinds complete the work, and the church is shown ready for its dedication. And during the course of construction the builders experience difficulties – from poor soil for the foundations, from the fear of lack of money to continue the work, from an agitator and a tumultuous mob, from critics who complain that the church is too ornate, or that it is too "modern." Besides the immediate troubles experienced by the group of workmen represented by Bert, Alfred and Edwin, the more general difficulties of the Church in the Modern World are symbolized in the action: the difficulties of the Church opposed, ignored, or interfered with by the secular tendencies of the present age.

A Chorus, as in Greek Tragedy, comments in verse from time to time upon the needs and troubles of the Church to-day, and upon the action. This Chorus opens both parts of the play, and from time to time appeals to "The Rock," who, though he takes little part in the action, symbolizes the permanence and continuity of the Church of God, and its resistance to the forces of evil and dissolution.

After the opening chorus, and some words of encouragement and consolation by "The Rock," a chant of Builders is heard, followed by a chant of the Unemployed, to which the Builders reply. The light then discovers the modern bricklayers discussing their work and many other things as well. A remark by one of them leads to an "experiment with time," in which the builders find themselves spectators of the conversion of Sabert, King of London, and his Saxon followers, by the Roman missionary Mellitus.[5] After this scene they resume their work, but under great difficulties: the ground is swampy. To them appears Rahere, the builder of St. Bartholomew's, and after reassuring them he and his men give them supernatural aid in the work.[6] They are next confronted by social opposition, in the form of an agitator and a mob; and their momentary conflict with the mob calls up to our memory, as so upon the stage as the following scene, the troubles of Nehemiah in rebuilding the Wall of Jerusalem.[7]

In the second part the building (interspersed with other historical scenes) is completed. A scene of the Reformation reminds us of the dangers of destruction. A group of scenes towards the end recall the dedication of other churches: Westminster Abbey, St. Michael Paternoster Royal, and

St. Paul's. At the end "The Rock" reappears; and the play is completed by the Bishop's benediction of the audience.

Signed T. S. ELIOT
MARTIN BROWNE

* * * *

FOREWORD ON THE PAGEANT PLAY AND ITS PURPOSE

> We look into the past and into the future, seeing pioneers who in every age have built up, despite opposition, misunderstanding and strife, the Houses of God in London.
>
> E. Martin Browne

> The problem of church-building is integral with the problem of more and better housing in general. The employment of men for building churches suggests the whole problem of unemployment.
>
> T. S. Eliot

> From time to time the ancient and undying chants of the Church are heard, variously treated. Among these is *Vexilla Regis* – that haunting melody sung by the Clerk of Oxenford in the Miller's Tale of Chaucer.[8]
>
> Martin Shaw

NOTES

1. The full subtitle: *A Pageant Play Written for Performance at Sadler's Wells Theatre 28 May – 9 June 1934 on behalf of the Forty-Five Churches Fund of the Diocese of London / Book of Words by T. S. Eliot*. The publication date was 31 May 1934, but copies were available for sale at the opening performance on 28 May.

2. TSE recalled his commission and role in the composition of the play in "The Three Voices of Poetry" (1953): "The invitation to write the words for this spectacle . . . came at a moment when I seemed to myself to have exhausted my meagre poetic gifts, and to have nothing more to say. . . . The task was clearly laid out: I had only to write the words of prose dialogue for scenes of the usual historical pageant pattern, for which I had been given a scenario. I had also to provide a number of choral passages in verse, the content of which was left to my own devices. . . . This chorus of *The Rock* was not a dramatic voice; though many lines were distributed, the personages were unindividuated. Its members were speaking *for me*, not uttering words that really represented any supposed character of their own."

3. Rev. Rosslyn Webb Odell (1879-1942), rector of St. Anne's, Soho, was working with Browne on a projected pageant of church history in Britain and was the director of the Forty-Five Churches Fund, which received all proceeds. TSE met E. Martin Browne (1900-80) in 1930 through George Bell, Bishop of Chichester, when Browne was director of religious drama

for the diocese. Browne discusses his scenarios and TSE's collaboration in refining them in *The Making of T. S. Eliot's Plays* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1969), 5-13. After directing *The Rock*, Browne went on to direct TSE's *Murder in the Cathedral* for the Canterbury Festival in 1935 and *The Family Reunion* in London in 1939.

4. The church and theater musician Martin Shaw (1875-1958) wrote the full score for the pageant, including the music for TSE's choruses, which were written to be spoken to Shaw's music. TSE wrote to Browne on 7 Dec 1933 about "a gap to be filled in with a few bricklayers' terms, which I shall obtain from an expert," identifying here his fellow Faber director Frank Morley. On 27 Mar 1934, he wrote to Dobrée: "HERE is my dialogue do not laugh at my simplicity: I am told to have Wren talking to Pepys and Evelyn . . . and saying he is designing St. Paul. His predicting jerrybuilding of future is MY idea and I should like to keep it – please PLEASE try to put this into good period language for me and hash it about as you will, shall be grateful and will acknowledge in preface."

The distinguished architect N. F. (Nugent Francis) Cachemaille-Day (1896-1976) designed over sixty English churches. On 13 Feb 1934, TSE thanked Father Gabriel Herbert of Chichester for sending him a recent article by Cachemaille-Day (evidently "Ecclesiastical Architecture in the Present Age," *RIBA Journal*, 40 [1932-33]), "which I shall read with much interest." According to Browne, the Rev. Vincent Howson (1890-1957), vicar of Ratcliffe, Limehouse, former Shakespearean actor and director of an amateur dramatic company, complained to him before the opening that TSE's dialogue was "not true cockney" and insisted on altering some of the lines according to his own ear for the dialect (*The Making of T. S. Eliot's Plays*, 14).

5. The first Christian King of Essex, Sabert (also spelled Saberht, Saeberht) reigned from 604 until his death in 616. He was converted by Mellitus (d. 624), who had been sent by Pope Gregory to aid Augustine of Canterbury in the conversion of the Anglo-Saxons; later, Mellitus was the first Bishop of London and third Archbishop of Canterbury.

6. In 1123, the Augustinian monk Rahere (d. 1144) founded both St. Bartholemew's Hospital (known as Barts, the oldest hospital in Europe), as well as the adjoining Priory Church of St. Bartholomew the Great (known as Great St. Bart's).

7. The Book of Nehemiah is set in the fifth century BC, after the Babylonian exile; its central character, appointed as governor of Judah, outmaneuvers internal and external opposition, rebuilds the walls of Jerusalem, and attempts to restore the Jewish community in conformity with Mosaic law.

8. While the use of the Latin hymn "Vexilla regis" is indicated in the stage directions of *The Rock*, it does not appear in Chaucer's "Miller's Tale." There, Nicholas, the poor scholar and seducer of his landlord's wife, sings "Angelus ad virginem."

"The Rock"

To the Editor of *The Spectator*

The Spectator, 152 (8 June 1934) 887[1]

Sir, – Mr. Verschoyle's amiable review of *The Rock* in your issue of June 1st leaves me wondering what he thinks that the production was intended to be.[2] The "play" makes no pretence of being a "contribution to English dramatic literature": it is a *revue*. My only seriously dramatic aim was to show that there is a possible *rôle* for the Chorus: an aim which would have failed completely without the aid of a perfectly trained group of speakers like Miss Fogerty's.[3] And to consider *The Rock* as an "official apologia" for church-building is to lay a weight upon it which this rock was never intended to bear.[4] It is not an apologia for the campaign, but an advertisement. If I had meant to write an apologia – I do not know whether many other people besides Mr. Verschoyle think that one is needed – I should have written a prose pamphlet.

I also wonder what Mr. Verschoyle wanted, when he speaks of my "reluctance to commit myself to logical justification" and my "unwillingness to substantiate my beliefs."[5] He does not make matters clearer by referring to "despair of the Church's attitude towards such questions as Housing and Population" – a despair which we are to believe has helped to convert people to Communism or Fascism.[6] Let me recommend for reading, to Communists, Fascists, and Mr. Verschoyle, the Archbishop of Canterbury's speech at the Guildhall on March 12th, on the subject of Housing.[7] And as for Population, would Mr. Verschoyle have wished me to tax my poetic resources by making my Chorus declaim about Birth-Control?

In conclusion, may I repeat what every author knows: that criticism is only valuable to an author when it is particularized?

— I am, Sir, etc.,

T. S. ELIOT

THE CRITERION, 24 RUSSELL SQUARE, W. C. 1.

NOTES

1. The CC is dated 1 June.

2. Derek Verschoyle (1911-73), literary editor of the *Spectator*, published "The Theatre" in the *Spectator*, 152 (1 June 1934), 851.

3. Elsie Fogerty (1865-1945) was a teacher of drama, elocution, and voice. She founded the Central School of Speech and Drama in 1906 and trained such actors as Laurence Olivier, John Gielgud, and Peggy Ashcroft. The chorus in *The Rock* consisted of pupils trained by her. TSE wrote to Theodore Spencer on 20 June 1934 that they "did their job admirably" (*L7* 242).

4. "Apart, therefore, from its place as a contribution to English dramatic literature, *The Rock* is to be considered as an official *apologia* for the campaign of church-building which the fund was started to finance" (851).

5. "Mr. Eliot's defense of the Church is based rather on invocations than on definition, and he seems reluctant to commit himself to logical justification. For the most part the Church's cause is assumed and not stated, and at times Mr. Eliot's unwillingness to substantiate his beliefs makes him appear to be doing little more than strike an attitude" (851).

6. "Acceptance of Fascism or Communism is for many of their followers the result, not the cause, of dissatisfaction with the Church. The causes in many instances lie elsewhere; in, for example, despair of the Church's attitude towards such questions as Housing and Population. Mr. Eliot does not touch upon the latter problem, and only deals fragmentarily with the former" (851).

7. As reported in the *Times* of 16 Mar 1934, the Archbishop of Canterbury Cosmo Gordon Lang (1864-1945) presided at a meeting of the Church Union Housing Association held at the Guildhall on 15 Mar. In outlining the housing issues faced in postwar years, he identified three major problems to be addressed: "the clearance of slums; the evil of overcrowding; and the necessity of providing houses at rents suitable for the lower paid workers" (8).

"The Rock"

To the Editor of *The New Statesman and Nation*

The New Statesman and Nation, NS 7 (9 June 1934) 880

Sir, – Mr. Francis Birrell's notice of *The Rock* in your issue of to-day is, I dare say, quite excessively laudatory; but I am naturally disposed to accept without protest any praise that is not robbed from others. But when he says that "all the way through, both in the prose and verse passages and in what the film writers would call the continuation," I show myself "a greater master of theatrical technique than all our professional dramatists put together," he is unknowingly assigning to me a good deal of the work which was done by the producer, Mr. E. Martin Browne.[1]

T. S. ELIOT

24 RUSSELL SQUARE W.C.I.

NOTE

1. Francis Birrell (1889-1935), critic and journalist who was connected with the Bloomsbury Circle, made this statement in "Mr. Eliot's Revue," printed in the issue of 2 June (847).

"The Use of Poetry"

To the Editor of *The New English Weekly*

The New English Weekly, 5 (14 June 1934) 215

Sir, – Now, Mr. Orage,[1] Sir, it seems to me the time has come to engross a little more of your space to do some sweeping up after Ezra. One can't be everywhere at once; and a good deal of litter has accumulated: I will only deal with what concerns me.[2]

Mr. Pound has done your readers a disservice in suggesting that a book of mine, which is an unsatisfactory attempt to say something worth saying, is more negligible than another book of mine which is an unsatisfactory attempt to say a variety of things most of which were not worth saying.[3] There was, however, one notion running through my book on "The Use of Poetry," something about the development of critical consciousness, which seemed to me interesting; but Mr. Pound has not mentioned it, and I do not propose to discuss it. What Mr. Pound really has to say is this: that my lecture on the Countess of Pembroke (pawky humour) was good enough to include in a new edition of *Selected Essays*, and that the rest might well be scrapped.[4] I wholeheartedly agree. But I cannot help being exacerbated by a critic who takes a great space to condemn an inferior book for the wrong reasons, and who cannot stick to the point, because he refuses to see it.

Mr. Pound might have been usefully occupied in saying that I overrated the criticism of Dryden; and that through ignorance, inattention, and haste, I both underrated and misunderstood the criticism of Coleridge. He might have told you, in so many words, that my lecture on Arnold was prejudiced, ill thought out, and wholly superfluous. He might have said that my lecture on "The Modern Mind" was undigested. He might have said that I had spent eight hours in coming to no conclusion. But he has done none of these things. Instead, he wastes time flinging tomatoes at Mr. Richards and Mr. Maritain, whose works I do not suppose he has read; for as he says himself, one cannot read everything. Still, one need not call them "racketeer-aesthetes and theorists."[5]

Mr. Pound suggests that "Fabre, Fraser, Frobenius, Fenellosa" mean nothing to me.[6] I at least know how to spell Frazer, but beyond that, Fabre and Frazer mean to me two very valuable collectors of facts. Fabre was, so

far as I am qualified to judge, a great observer; Frazer a great collator; but neither of them was, so far as I know, and in the sense in which I was using the word *mind*, a great exemplar of the modern *mind*. To Fenellosa I am grateful for having provided the material and occasion for Mr. Pound's *Cathay*. And Frobenius, to judge by what I have read of his work (*Schicksalskunde*) is to me an example of the modern "mind" in its most unpleasant form.[7]

I should like to know what Mr. Pound means by *nasty blasphemy*.[8] I should be still more interested to know what he means by the phrase: "the fall of the church, in its failure to deal with evil when that evil menaces the comfort of its subsidised professors and professional racketeers." [132]

It is interesting to learn that the church fails to deal with evil menacing the *comfort* of its professors, but the compliment expressed hardly seems to have been intended.

Now, Mr. Orage, Sir, I am going to set round the chimbly and have a chaw terbacker with Miss Meadows and the gals; and then I am going away for a 4tnight where that old Rabbit can't reach me with his letters nor even with his post cards.[9]

I am, dear Sir, Your outraged,
POSSUM[10]

NOTES

1. A. R. Orage founded the *NEW* in 1932 and edited it until his death in Nov 1934.

2. Pound's review of *The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism*, "What Price the Muses Now," appeared in the *NEW* of 24 May 1934 (130-32).

3. TSE is here characterizing *The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism* as "an unsatisfactory attempt to say a variety of things most of which were not worth saying," while *After Strange Gods* is represented as "an unsatisfactory attempt to say something worth saying." On 20 June 1934, TSE wrote to Paul Elmer More regarding both of these books and the "difficulties and . . . short notice" of their composition: "the subject of 'The Use of Poetry' was undertaken merely because it seemed the one on which I could write with the minimum of new reading and thinking; the field of 'After Strange Gods' was one to which my real interest had turned. I therefore feel more regret at the inadequacy of the latter than of the former" (Princeton).

4. Pound wrote of the "Apology for the Countess of Pembroke": "Second essay. Pawky humour in the title. Essay full of meat, acute observation, Mr. Eliot's own view with highly respectable knowledge of the matter" (131). He stated later that the reader "would do well to read the first part of the work and chuck the rest into his waste basket" (131).

5. "He prophesies *re* Mr. Richards on no base of offered evidence, but in the hope that Richards will kill off certain minor poets . . . The nastiest blasphemy is quoted from the typical French religious faddist, and a racketeer on the borders of aesthetics . . . his [TSE's] gross

insensitivity to the history of the past 150 years . . . is so great as to disqualify him from any perception of poetry in relation to life or to any thought outside the interlocking cenacles of just such racketeer-aesthetes and theorists" (131).

6. "The gravest charge against his rank as critic is that he ventures to label an essay 'The Modern Mind,' and to have found NONE of the more vigorous intellects of the past century worth even passing mention. . . . Fabre, Fraser, Frobenius, Fenollosa would appear to mean nothing to him" (131).

7. As TSE acknowledged in *Ezra Pound: His Metric and Poetry* (1917): "The late Ernest Fenollosa left a quantity of manuscripts, including a great number of rough translations (literally exact) from the Chinese. . . . Mrs. Fenollosa recognized that in Pound the Chinese manuscripts would find the interpreter whom her husband would have wished; she accordingly forwarded the papers for him to do as he liked with. It is thus due to Mrs. Fenollosa's acumen that we have *Cathay*" (1.639). The German anthropologist and expert in African culture Leo Viktor Frobenius (1873-1938), whom Pound met in 1927, published *Schicksalskunde im Sinne des Kulturwerdens* [*The Science of Destiny in terms of Cultural Development*] in 1932. Though TSE confessed to Erich Alport on 17 Aug 1931, "I know nothing about his work except that Ezra Pound has spoken to me of it in terms of the highest praise" (*L5* 640), he wrote to Herbert Read on 12 Apr 1934 about the "desirability of having an article in *The Criterion* about Frobenius" and "the possibility of trying the publication of a translation of one of his books."

8. "The nastiest blasphemy is quoted from the typical French religious faddist, and a racketeer on the borders of aesthetics" (131).

9. Br'er Rabbit and Miss Meadows and the Gals are fictional characters in the collection of African American folktales *Uncle Remus, his Songs and his Sayings: The Folk-Lore of the Old Plantation* (1881), adapted and compiled by Joel Chandler Harris. TSE, who often addressed Pound as "Rabbit" in his correspondence, was in the country at Frank Morley's Pikes Farm in Lingfield, Surrey from 11 to 28 June.

10. Br'er Possum is another fictional character in *Uncle Remus*. "Possum" was Pound's nickname for TSE. Writing to Pound on 19 Jul 1922, TSE humorously suggests an alternate name for his soon-to-be-launched *Criterion*: "What do you think of 'The Possum' for a title?" (*L1* 708). TSE signs himself "Possum" in a 1925 letter to Dorothy Pound (*L2* 714). Pound refers to himself and TSE as "Ez Po and Possum" in 1935 (*The Selected Letters of Ezra Pound: 1907-1941*, ed. D. D. Paige [London: Faber, 1951], 272). TSE's signature here as "POSSUM" is his first public use of the pseudonym, leading to his *Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats* (1939).

A Commentary

The Criterion: A Literary Review, 13 (July 1934) 624-30

The aims of the English Association are set forth as follows:

(a) To promote the due recognition of English as an essential element in the national education.
(b) To discuss methods of teaching English and the correlation of School and University work.
(c) To encourage and facilitate advanced study in English literature and language.
(d) To unite all those who are interested in English studies; to bring teachers into contact with one another and with writers and readers who do not teach; and to induce those who are not themselves engaged in teaching to use their influence in the cause of English as a part of education.

We may presume that it is to forward one or more of these aims that the English Association has published an anthology of "modern verse" entitled *The Modern Muse*.[1]

At first sight, these aims appear harmless enough, and even commendable. After a little reflection, considering the four points together, the suspicion creeps into our mind that one or two rather important questions have been begged. We should like, for instance, to make up our opinion as to what is the *due* "recognition of English," before we commit ourselves to promoting it. We ought indeed to have some notion of what we mean by the "national education." Who are the people who should be taught English, and what English, and how much should they be taught, and are they all to be taught the same things and in the same way? And if we aim to "discuss methods," as we certainly should do, ought we not to aim also at coming to a conclusion? What is meant by "advanced study"? Who ought to pursue it, and why? And should we not have a fifth point: to "discuss" the relation of the study of English to other studies?

The absence of these further questions from the agenda does not justify us in coming to any conclusion about the activities of the English Association; but it may perhaps justify us in asking the English Association

for some further justification of itself. The most remarkable achievement of the English Association hitherto has been two previous collections of verse, *Poems of To-day*, First Series and Second Series. The Association boasts that the first series has sold 350,000 copies; the second 132,000 copies. And it asserts, also on the jacket of the present volume, that *Poems of To-day* "has probably had the largest sale, both among the general public and *in schools* (italics ours), of any anthology of modern verse, not only in our lifetime but in the whole history of the publishing of anthologies." An examination of these three ignoble compilations must lead us to ask the English Association to do something more than justify its existence. Such a request might be made of that comparatively inactive congregation, the Royal Society of Literature.[2] But of the English Association we must ask whether it can show any reason why its meddling with British and American poetry should not be denounced.

The prefatory matter to *The Modern Muse* is more moderate in tone than that of *Poems of To-day*, and does not contain such remarkable specimens of flamboyant bad writing. Nevertheless, it contrives to concentrate a notable amount of nonsense on one page.

> In each of the continents are vast numbers of persons whose mother tongue is English, and it is for the purpose of quickening among these peoples the sense of the greatness of their common heritage that this collection of contemporary poetry gathered from the four quarters of the globe has been made. [vii]

What wandering mind could have conceived such a thought as that! The effect of this queer anthology upon the more lively minds among the "vast numbers" speaking various English dialects over the "globe," should be to impress them with the prodigious quantity of junk which our "common heritage" is accumulating. And a phrase like "the four quarters of the globe" to appear in an official announcement of the *English* Association! The manifesto then strikes a note of profundity:

> The present century has seen events which have deeply influenced human thought everywhere. The Great War and its consequences have shaken the world from end to end. Such experiences could not fail to find expression in poetry, and the interest in the present volume should be all the greater in that it illustrates these reactions among peoples living in lands far apart but speaking one language. [vii]

It is no doubt to illustrate the effect of the Great War and its consequences that the anthologists have included the following address to a mole:

> Did the wonder of the day
> Beat like a voice upon thy shuttered soul
> To tell thee cruelly that thou wert blind,
> And make thee know thyself a little mole
> With pushing snout,
> From worlds of light shut out? [118][3]

Of course the anthology does anything but illustrate the effects which it pretends to illustrate. For one thing, some of the better poems in the volume were written before the War. For some of the others, it would defy criticism to discover *what* the effects of the War were. More of the poems illustrate merely the fact that bad poets are not really *influenced* by anything, being too obtuse. But in the next paragraph the anthologist unconsciously surrenders all pretence to critical judgment:

> The Anthology is intended to exhibit the range and variety of poetry among contemporary writers of English throughout the world. While a standard of excellence has been kept in mind, the main aim has been to make the selection fully representative of the various countries. To this aim must be attributed the presence of poems which are unusual in form, structure, and subject-matter; and it should be remembered under what conditions, geographical, political, and social, they have been written. [vii]

This is the most astonishing confession by an anthology-maker that I have ever read. This anthology issued by the English Association does not pretend to be an anthology chosen from among the best poems written in our time. Its aim has been to represent the various countries! And then we are told that it is to *this* consideration that we owe the presence of poems unusual in form, structure and subject-matter. (I wonder what is the distinction intended between "form" and "structure"). Had the anthology aimed at including merely the most excellent poems, we are given to understand, no poems unusual in form, structure or subject-matter would have been chosen.

Another critic has pointed out that several of the most interesting modern poets have been omitted.[4] That seems to me a minor fault in this collection. What is more deplorable is that several of the best modern poets

have *not* been omitted.[5] Had they been omitted, the public might less easily be gulled into accepting this anthology. The book might even have provided, for relaxed moments, some innocent merriment. It is the mixture of good and bad that makes the book dangerous. There is a sense in which the word "catholicity" means something pernicious, and in this sense the book is fully catholic. The editors do not show bad taste: they show no taste at all.

The occasion is much more serious than the appearance of one more bad anthology. This book has a kind of official sanction; and as we are assured that its monstrous predecessors have circulated in schools, there is good reason to believe that this volume will follow them. In compiling a collection of verse for which such vast popularity is anticipated, the English Association should have felt a sense of responsibility towards the public. It should have taken as one of its aims, instead of the brainless balderdash of its preface, the aim of educating the public taste. It might not sell 132,000 copies if it did. Instead, it would perform a public service. It has preferred, in a spirit of addled Imperialism and Anglo-American amity of the most futile kind, to offer a marketable ware to English-speaking people in "the four quarters of the globe"; and to talk about it in the language used by politicians without policy, whose only programme is to stay in power.[6]

The whole problem of education is involved: in the long run the most important problem of society. We seem nowadays to be committed to the task of giving some sort of education to everybody. Education is a training of the mind and of the sensibility, an intellectual and an emotional discipline. In a society in which this discipline is neglected, a society which uses words instead of thoughts and feelings, one may expect any sort of religious, moral, social and political aberration, and eventual decomposition or petrification. And we seem to have little to hope from the official representatives of education.

Sir Charles Petrie has written a brisk and readable book on *Monarchy* (Eyre & Spottiswoode, 10s. 6d. net), which is just good enough for one to wish that it might have been better.[7] Perhaps the chief faults of the book are negative: a lack of philosophy and a lack of passion. The result is that the author gives the appearance of preaching, not to the converted, but to those born in the faith; those who like to think about the matter a little, but not too long or too deeply. The book is commended by the publishers as being "outspoken" (an adjective given popularity by the Dean of St. Paul's);[8] and in some matters of detail that is true; yet the total effect is that of

something cautious and tentative. Sir Charles gives some interesting information about the actual role of kings in modern European history, but does not concern himself much with earlier writers on the subject. It is refreshing, certainly, to meet a Bt., M.A.(Oxon.), F.R.Hist.Soc.[9] (for this is his title-page description) who is acquainted with the work of Maurras, Benoist, Bainville and Gaxotte.[10] But the name of Châteaubriand occurs only once, in a not very enlightening connexion;[11] and the names of Bonald and de Maistre are not to be found in the index.[12] He mentions that "Of late there has been, in France itself, a very decided reaction" [83] against the Liberal interpretation of history; yet the name of Fustel de Coulanges, again, is not to be found in the index.[13] And his book is hardly "controversial" (the other adjective used by his publishers). It is, I fear, more likely to give the impression that royalty is an "institution worth preserving," rather than a form of government.[14]

This suspicion is increased by the offhand way in which he speaks of dictatorships. His chief ground of objection to dictatorships is that they cannot last, rather than that he finds in them anything essentially incompatible with the principle of kingship.[15] Yet it is possible to argue that, while they do last, they are a violation of that principle. Furthermore, Sir Charles does not distinguish between the two kinds of dictatorship: those which are merely *de facto*, and exist because, in some peculiar situation in which a country may find itself, no other form of government will for the moment work; and those which create *une mystique* (there is no English equivalent for this useful word of Péguy's).[16] The Roman Empire (with its Imperial deification) lasted a long time; and I see no *à priori* reason why the system of government of Russia should collapse merely because it is a dictatorship. But perhaps Sir Charles would call the Russian government an oligarchy. In any case, what is to be the attitude of a royalist towards any system under which absolute submission to the will of a Leader is made an article of faith or a qualification for office? Surely the royalist can admit only one higher authority than the Throne, which is the Church.

The problem of Church and State, indeed, is quite ignored in Sir Charles Petrie's book; and this omission alone is enough to render it inefficient. It is the distinction of Maurras to have recognized the capital importance of this question, though his method of treating it is open to objection. A purely secular theory of kingship runs the risk of being no more than a theory, based on experience, of what is most expedient. Even on this

ground, the author of *Monarchy* might have experimented with new ideas, such as vesting the ownership of land and of the materials of production in the Crown, instead of that questionable proprietor, the nation. He might further have shown how a devotion to the Throne (as distinct from personal devotion to a popular King) may act as a check and balance upon devotion to the party, the party leader, or the State. A young French royalist, Thierry Maulnier, has recently remarked in "1934":

> The law of French society does not consist in an utter devotion (*un dévouement total*) – however enthusiastic and heroic this devotion may be – of the individual to the State, but in the restoration of a right equilibrium and of right relations between the State and the individual.[17]

To which the commentator of *L'Action Française* adds: "whilst protecting the rights, the duties, the forces and the amenities of the family" [5].

T.S.E.

NOTES

1. London: Oxford UP, 1934. This volume bears the subtitle *Poems of To-day, British and American*. Minus the geographical indicators, this had been the title of the two precursors of this volume, published in 1915 (First Series) and 1922 (Second Series). The four aims cited above (a-d) were published in the front of the volume (v); appearing elsewhere in various forms, they date back to the founding of the English Association in 1906.

2. Founded in 1820, the Royal Society of Literature encouraged scholarly pursuits and publications and granted honors to "works of great literary merit" (according to its royal charter of 1825). TSE was invited to join the Royal Society of Literature as a Fellow in 1929 (*L5* 15-16). TSE's mild slight here ("that comparatively inactive congregation") is perhaps a backhanded defense, given F. R. Leavis's stinging critique of the organization as having "no function." Leavis's extensive account of its foibles and lack of standards culminates in a jibe at Eliot: the Royal Society's occasional virtues "can hardly tend to make Mr. Eliot feel more at home in the Society (for we find him to our astonishment a Fellow). Nor can his presence in such company tend to reverse our conclusion as to the influence of the Society on standards" ("What's Wrong with Criticism?," *Scrutiny* 1.2 [1932], 141).

3. "The Mole," by Frederick William Harvey (1888-1957), the author of the popular poem "Ducks."

4. TSE perhaps has in mind a review of *The Modern Muse* that appeared in *TLS* (12 Apr 1934). It quotes from the preface: "'the main aim has been to make the selection fully representative of various countries. To this aim must be attributed the presence of poems which are unusual in form, structure and subject-matter . . .' This sounds an oddly apologetic note, as though any departure from the accustomed must needs be excused. But few will be likely to criticize this volume for its cultivation of novelties: there is much that is all too usual in 'form, structure and subject-matter.' The numerous little-known writers among the familiar names

serve for the most part to increase the proportion of careful verse to good poetry, and the standard is sometimes far from exacting" (263).

5. TSE's "A Song for Simeon" and "Marina" appear in this volume.

6. In this issue of the *Criterion*, whose "Commentary" criticizes the English Association, TSE published a letter from the same organization inviting donations and subscriptions for "the Establishment of a Research Fund for English Literature" (656).

7. Sir Charles Alexander Petrie, 3rd Baronet (1895-1977), historian and author of numerous books, including *Monarchy* (London, 1933). On 5 Mar 1934, TSE complained to Douglas Jerrold: "I wrote for Petrie's *Monarchy* as soon as I saw it reviewed in *The Times Literary Supplement*, and have been told that the review list is closed. . . . I should judge that this book would have been one peculiarly suitable for treatment in *The Criterion*" (tseliot.com/explore/letters).

8. Known as the "gloomy Dean" for his regular, pessimistic columns in the *Evening Standard*, Sir William Ralph Inge – Dean of St. Paul's Cathedral, London, from 1911 to 1934 – was a vocal critic of modernity and the author, among many publications, of *Outspoken Essays* (1919, and second series 1922). See 2.523 and 4.42 n.12.

9. That is, a baronet, an Oxford MA, and a fellow of the Royal Historical Society.

10. Historian, journalist, and monarchist Jacques Pierre Bainville (1879-1936) was the author of the best-selling *Histoire de France* (1924) and an important figure in the Action Française. Robert Sencourt reviewed Bainville's *Napoléon* in the *Criterion* (Apr 1933). In a letter to *The Christian News-letter* on 28 Aug 1940, TSE said of Bainville: "The one man in [Maurras's] group with some understanding of foreign affairs was Jacques Bainville, a writer of brilliant and lucid mind, whose early death is much to be regretted, but who was, like Maurras, a free-thinker and a product of the post-Revolution bourgeoisie" (6.122). Pierre Gaxotte (1895-1982) was a historian and journalist, well known for his *La Révolution française* (1928), a counterrevolutionary critique and attempted rehabilitation of Louis XV; A. L. Morton reviewed the volume for the *Criterion* (July 1929). TSE translated Gaxotte's article "Fustel de Coulanges" for the *Criterion* (Dec 1928).

11. The brief reference occurs when Petrie describes the political problems attendant upon the Restoration: "After the tyranny of the Empire public opinion was demanding liberty, and Louis XVIII responded with the *Charte*, which provoked the sneers of Chateaubriand" (106).

12. Chateaubriand, Catholic royalist and member of the nobility, took an equally dim view of the French Revolution. With Joseph de Maistre, Louis Gabriel Ambroise, Vicomte de Bonald (1754-1840) was an author, politician, and critic of the French Revolution and of industrial modernity.

13. The historical method of Numa Denis Fustel de Coulanges (1830-89) focused on primary texts and promoted an objective, scientific mode free from ideological bias. It later influenced the discipline of sociology.

14. Petrie argues that "Monarchy is a system, and dictatorship a form, of government" (278). He also cites with approval Hugh Sellon's *Whither, England?* (1932): "Is this [the popularity and prestige of the monarchy] not a warning against rashly abolishing an old institution because it appears no longer to be desirable or useful? By preserving it you will preserve for future generations an institution which may again become of incalculable use to the nation" (274).

15. Petrie on dictatorships: "One consequence of this [postwar crisis] has been the abandonment of democracy in favour of dictatorship, but by itself the latter form of government can only secure temporary benefits. . . . That a dictatorship is probably the only effective method of repairing the evil wrought by democratic administration is true, but the whole of human history goes to show that a dictatorship is generally a temporary expedient" (15-17).

16. In 1928, reviewing Benda's *La Trahison des clercs*, TSE writes: "The national emotion, cause of so much hatred between nations, as well as the class emotion and the race emotion, has become a kind of mysticism (there is no English equivalent for *la mystique*)" (3.346). Péguy had written, "Tout commence en mystique et tout finit en politique" ("Everything begins in mysticism and ends in politics.") *Notre jeunesse* (Paris: Cahiers de la quinzaine, 1910), 27. In his April 1932 "Commentary" in the *Criterion*, TSE again glosses the word: "What chiefly interests me at the moment is the general interest, not so much in economics, as in what Péguy would have called *la mystique* of economics; the mixture, which may easily be a muddle, of economic theory, humanitarian enthusiasm, and religious fervour" (4.456).

17. Thierry Maulnier's review of Blandine Ollivier's book *Jeunesse fasciste* originally appeared in the right-wing periodical *1934*. But TSE's direct source comes from *L'Action Française*, 13 May 1935. Under the heading "La jeunesse italienne," the anonymous editor has excerpted and commented on Maulnier's article in the recurring section, "Revue de la presse." The original French reads: "Le statut de la société française n'est pas dans un dévouement total – ce dévouement fût-il enthousiaste et héroïque – de l'individu à l'État, mais dans la restauration d'un juste équilibre et de justes rapports entre l'État et l'individu" (5).

A review of *The Oxford Handbook of Religious Knowledge*

London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1933.
Pp. xxix + 303.

The Criterion: A Literary Review, 13 (July 1934) 709

This handbook was prepared by a committee, at the request of the Bishop of Oxford, for the use of teachers (of pupils over the age of eleven) in that diocese.[1] But the task has been performed so admirably that the book is to be recommended also to parents for private use, for introducing their children to Bible reading and the Prayer Book: indeed, there are few of the laity who would not find it profitable for themselves.

T. McG.[2]

NOTES

1. The subtitle reads: "Issued by the Oxford Diocesan Council of Education for students and for teachers of pupils over the age of eleven years." The English theologian Thomas Banks Strong (1861-1944) was Bishop of Oxford from 1925 to 1937.

2. Signed erroneously with the initials of Thomas MacGreevy (Gallup 229).

A review of *The Mystical Doctrine of St. John of the Cross* Being an abridgement of his works as translated into English by David Lewis and revised by Dom Benedict Zimmerman, O.D.C. With an introduction by R. H. J. Steuart, S.J.

London: Sheed & Ward, 1934. Pp. xxiii + 213.

The Criterion: A Literary Review, 13 (July 1934) 709-10

The description above indicates the method which has been followed. The arrangement is excellent.[1] For anyone who wishes to make a study of the work of St. John (a Spanish writer little known in this country) this is an admirable introduction; and for ordinary educated people, will give all that they need to know. While very few persons ever reach a stage so advanced that they can adopt St. John of the Cross as their guide, and must be content to use more elementary manuals of meditation, there is great advantage in acquiring some notion of what are the higher stages of the contemplative life. And this convenient little book can be slipped into the pocket when leaving for a weekend or the summer holidays.[2]

T. McG.[3]

NOTES

1. "The arrangement of this book – the selection of passages and subheadings – is taken from the French work *Abrégé de toute la doctrine mystique de s. Jean de la Croix*" (v).

2. TSE also began acquiring for his library this year *The Complete Works of Saint John of the Cross*, 3 vols, trans. and ed. E. Allison Peers (London: Burns Oates and Washbourne, 1934, 1935).

3. Signed with the initials of Thomas MacGreevy, but ascribed to TSE in the *Criterion* index. Gallup first attributed the review to TSE in his *Catalogue of English and American First Editions of Writings by T. S. Eliot*, compiled with TSE's assistance to accompany the exhibition at Yale University from 22 Feb to 20 Mar 1937 (New Haven, 1937), p. 19. Gallup noted the error of MacGreevy's initials there and again in his 1953 (p. 101) and 1969 (p. 229) editions of *T. S. Eliot: A Bibliography*. Many years later, however, after receiving an inquiry about the authorship of the review from Sister Anne Cyril Delaney in Aug 1952, TSE evidently checked the issue of the *Criterion* at that time, misremembering his authorship and assuming that the attribution to MacGreevy was correct. In his reply of 15 Aug, TSE wrote: "The short notice of 'The Mystical Doctrine of St. John of the Cross' in The *Criterion* of July 1934 was not by myself, but by Mr. Thomas McGreevey [*sic*]" (Houghton). Valerie Eliot later confirmed TSE's authorship in her copy of the *Criterion*, crossing out MacGreevy's initials and inserting TSE's.

In Sincerity and Earnestness: New Britain As I See It

New Britain: A Weekly Organ of National Renaissance, 3 (25 July 1934) 274

I rather wish that these remarks were not to be headed "In Sincerity and Earnestness," because I should like to think that my sincerity and earnestness could be taken for granted; but that is the Editor's business, not mine.[1]

I suffer, like most of my generation, in not having been brought up to think about politics and economics. (But if we had, we would certainly have been taught wrong.) It seemed that politics could be left to an inferior class of people, actuated by vanity and love of power, who liked politics; and it seemed that economics was a special study for a set of people who were studying it in order to make a living by teaching it to the next generation who were studying it in order to make a living by teaching it, etc.

It is probable that the politicians, bankers, economists, etc., of tomorrow will be the same sort of people as those who pursue these vocations today. They are the best qualified, for the primary reason that they are the sort of people who enjoy working these machines. They probably work the machine as well as it can be worked; and a later generation of them will probably provide the best people to run a better machine. They are moderately efficient at minor repairs and road troubles. But they are the last people to believe that any better machine can be made. That is human nature.

I do not suggest that all vocations will remain the same in New Britain. The Art of Newspaper Proprietorship will be a different art practised by different people; and the Art of Advertising will become a very minor profession indeed.

From the Christian point of view there are two parallel postulates to be made: (1) That the Christian Life is not merely the affair of the individual, and that "Christian feeling" alone will not make a bad piece of machinery work. (2) A mere change of machinery is not going to get us anywhere without a revival of Christian ideals and Christian ways of living. It is an unpleasant fact to face; but you cannot leave all the work to Professor Soddy, or Major Douglas, or anyone else; you have got to do a lot of work upon yourself.[2]

It is ridiculous to expect the majority of people to lead Christian lives under present conditions. It is extremely difficult even for the very poor

and for the stupid; it is almost impossible for the well-to-do and those who pass for intelligent.

As a postscript to point (2), it is unlikely that any change of social machinery which is more than tinkering would fail to modify profoundly our spiritual life. Only, these modifications, even when plausibly offering immediate good, may just as easily work for the worse as for the better.

The Churches cannot, of course, pick out any one political form and maintain that it is essential for the Christian Life; but they can and should denounce any political form which is either hostile to or subversive of the Christian Life. Nothing accordingly need be said about the necessary Christian attitude towards Communism, except to repeat the obvious warning against accepting any other form simply because it is anti-Communistic. As for Fascism, we have been told by its English exponent that it "synthesizes" the Nietzschean and the Christian doctrines.[3] The Christian ought to know what to think of a doctrine which "synthesizes" Christianity with something else. And the Christian cannot possibly agree that any simply political reorganization can be "the greatest cause and the greatest impulse in the world."[4]

There is another ground for rejecting Communism and Fascism, which is simply that they do not appear to have any solution, or even any awareness, of our real and urgent economic problems. Indeed, I gather from an article in *The Adelphi* that Social Credit Reform is to be deprecated because it might make people so contented that they would turn the deaf ear to the spiritual consolations of Communism.[5]

While the Churches cannot advocate any particular political system, or any particular economic machinery, they can and should oppose openly all systems that make Christian virtue more difficult of practice. The present system is worse than that: it elevates Christian sin into worldly virtue.

We cannot expect to extirpate the roots of sin, to kill the passions of acquisitiveness and love of power. But we can at least establish some order in which these vices do not receive the sanction of society. We cannot abolish social distinctions; but we can abolish an order in which the distinctions are merely between the wealthy, the well-to-do, the poor, and the destitute.

We must remember that voluntary poverty is a high Christian state; but that involuntary misery or wage-slavery is an anti-Christian state. And in condemning usury and love of power we must avoid the company of people who condemn usury and love of power because they have no inclination

towards them, and who condone gluttony and lust because they have a mind to them – inverting the Puritanism denounced in *Hudibras*.[6]

We need both intelligence and passion. Otherwise we are helpless against unintelligent passion. Both Fascism and Communism exhibit a diversion, to material ends, of passion which should only be devoted to religious ends. There are many people of intelligence, good-will and public spirit who cannot prostitute their emotions in this way, though they lack Christian Faith. These people are with us; but we must remember that it is the Christians who must provide the emotional intensity which is necessary. And we must also remember that it is our Christian duty to think as well as to feel; to think as clearly, as consistently and as thoroughly as we can.

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. The journal, co-edited by Watson Thomson and David Davies, was the inspiration of the Serbian Dimitri Mitrinovic, leader of the socialist New Britain Group, which advocated Social Credit and Guild Socialism and sought to bring about "a reconstruction of the British economic, political, and social order" and "to lift up the consciousness of the nation so that Fascism and Communism may be prevented." The editorial assistant Valerie Cooper wrote to TSE on 20 June that the editors wanted him "to write next week's article 'New Britain as I See It,' or 'In Sincerity and Earnestness' (we change the title or print both, as seems best to fit the case) . . . We are asking a series of well-known men and women to give their own personal views as to the necessary changes in society to make life in Britain really worth-while. We especially want you next, so as not to be too long after the appearance of 'The Rock.'" This was the eighth and last contribution in a series of articles under the two titles. TSE wrote to Ezra Pound on 19 July 1934: "Why dont you Podesta concentrate your views on What the World Needs into 900 words and send it to New Britain they wont pay but they will probably print it tell um with my urging you send etc. They do print a lot of bull shit which is a Pity."

2. The chemist and monetary theorist Frederick Soddy (1877-1956), a regular contributor to *New Britain*, was influenced by the ideas of Major C. H. Douglas and the Social Credit movement. TSE wrote to Bertrand Russell on 5 Oct 1927 that he was "much impressed by [Soddy's] *Wealth, Virtual Wealth and Debt* [1926]" (*L3* 740), a book on monetary policy and the role of energy in economic systems. In June 1934, TSE had been "tempted to accept" an invitation to speak to the West Riding Credit Association but declined in a letter of 13 June: "The cause of monetary reform, whether or not one accepts Douglas's scheme, or any other, in its entirety, is something for which it is now a public duty for every man to use his influence; and if I believed that I could forward it by addressing the Social Credit Association, I would put aside any other engagement. But I do not believe that this cause will benefit by speeches from those who would only appear to be incompetent zealots. At present, the best that I can do is to let it be known publicly that I believe in the necessity for reform or revolution on Social Credit lines. . . . I hope that I may qualify myself to be more vocal; and should be gratified if the invitation might be renewed a year hence." On 14 Mar 1934, TSE wrote to Donald Main about

Douglas, who formulated the economic philosophy of Social Credit: "It would be interesting if you would develop your ideas about Major Douglas, with whom, so far as I understand his ideas, I do not think I can agree."

3. Sir Oswald Mosley, founder of the British Union of Fascists, claimed in a speech on "The Philosophy of Fascism," delivered at the English Speaking Union on 22 Mar 1933: "I would suggest to you that in the last century, the major intellectual struggle arose from the tremendous impact of Nietzschean thought on the Christian civilization of two thousand years. That impact was only very slowly realized. Its full implications are only to-day working themselves out. . . . I am going to show you how I believe the Nietzschean and the Christian doctrines each synthesize" (Drennan 280; Mosley 43). Large portions of this speech (including the passages TSE summarizes and cites) were reproduced in James Drennan, *B.U.F.: Oswald Mosley and British Fascism* (London: John Murray, 1934), 279-87. The full text of the speech was published in the *Fascist Quarterly*, 1.1 (1935), 35-46.

4. "you have that basic doctrine of Fascism – service, self-surrender – to what the Fascist must conceive to be the greatest cause and the greatest impulse in the world" (Drennan 282; Mosley 43).

5. In "Communism and Individuality," G. S. Viner wrote: "So long as man is subject to his economic environment . . . his own potentialities will remain in the mass unrealized. // He will be half a man. The price of economic progress – vital to the continuance of human society and its advancement – has been the creation of a false duality. // The task is to achieve a new unity. That is Communism." *Adelphi*, 8 (July 1934), 280-81.

6. Samuel Butler's three-part mock epic poem *Hudibras*, written between 1660 and 1680, satirizes the excesses of the Puritans (Cromwellians and Presbyterians) during the English Civil War.

A review of *A Christian Sociology for To-day: An Abridged Edition of "Faith and Society,"* by Maurice B. Reckitt

London; New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1934. Pp. xi + 286.

The Criterion: A Literary Review, 13 (July 1934) 710

Faith and Society was, as a matter of fact, much too long a book.[1] Mr. Reckitt devoted so much space to an account of various organisations and movements in his field, as to be in danger of defeating his own purpose; the reader might have been tempted to wonder why, with so much attempted, so little seems to have been done. In its present form the book is a necessary addition to any library on the subject, either public or private.

T. McG.[2]

NOTES

1. Reckitt's *Faith and Society: A Study of the Structure, Outlook and Opportunity of the Christian Social Movement in Great Britain and the United States of America* (1932) contains 467 pages of text.

2. Signed, erroneously, with the initials of Thomas MacGreevy (Gallup 229).

John Marston[1]

John Marston, the dramatist, has been dead three hundred years. The date of his death, June 25, 1634, is one of the few certain facts that we know about him; but the appearance of the first volume of a new edition of his works, as well as an edition of his best-known play by itself, is a more notable event than the arrival of his tercentenary.[2]* For Marston has enjoyed less attention, from either scholars or critics, than any of his contemporaries of equal or greater rank; and for both scholars and critics he remains a territory of unexplored riches and risks. The position of most of his contemporaries is pretty well settled; one cannot go very far wrong in one's estimate of the dramatists with whom Marston worked: but about Marston a wide divergency of opinion is still possible. His greater defects are such as anyone can see; his merits are still a matter for controversy.

Little has transpired of the events of Marston's life since Bullen presented in 1887 what has hitherto been the standard edition.[3] The date and place of his birth have been unsettled:[4] but the main facts – that his mother was Italian, that he was educated at Brasenose College and put to the law, that he wrote satires and then plays for a brief period and finally entered the Church – are undisputed. We are left with the unsupported statement of Ben Jonson that he beat Marston and took away his pistol;[5] but, without necessarily impugning the veracity of Jonson, or suggesting that he wished to impress Drummond with his own superiority, having gone such a long journey to talk to him, we may do well to put aside the image of a mean and ridiculous figure which Jonson has left us before considering the value of Marston's work. And before reading the selections of Lamb, or the encomium of Swinburne, we should do better to read the plays of Marston – there are not many – straight through. Did Marston have anything of his own to say or not? Was he really a dramatist, or only a playwright through force of circumstances? And if he was a dramatist, in which of his plays was he at his best? In answering these questions we have, as with no other Elizabethan dramatist, the opportunity to go completely wrong; and that opportunity is an incentive.

Dr. Wood's first volume includes, besides *Antonio and Mellida* and *Antonio's Revenge*, *The Malcontent*.[6] There are three quartos of *The*

Malcontent: Dr. Wood tells us that he has followed the second (*B* in Dr. Greg's classification),[7] but has adopted what seemed to him better and fuller readings from A and C. Dr. Harrison's text is, he tells us, the "revised quarto" [ix], and he follows the Temple Dramatists principle (certainly the right one for such a series)[8†] of modernized spelling and punctuation. Our only complaint against both editors is that they have conscientiously limited themselves, in their notes, to what is verifiable, and have deprived themselves and their readers of that delight in aside and conjecture which the born annotator exploits. Dr. Harrison's glossary, for instance, omits some difficult words, but includes others of which the meaning is obvious; one wishes that editors of Elizabethan texts would take as their model that perfect annotator Mr. F. L. Lucas in his monumental edition of John Webster.[9] Dr. Wood appears to have had the advantage of consulting Dr. Harrison's edition; and it must be said that they both refer the reader to Mr. Lucas's edition of Webster for fuller information on certain points. Both Dr. Wood and Dr. Harrison seem to be assured on one critical judgment: that *The Malcontent* is the most important of Marston's plays. Dr. Harrison says forthright: "*The Malcontent* is Marston's best play" [ix]. Dr. Wood says only:

> The best of Marston's comedies and tragedies, and his great tragi-comedy, *The Malcontent*, have striking and original qualities. . . . *The Malcontent* is one of the most original plays of its period. . . . [xxxix]

It is this assumption that we are privileged to examine.

If we read first the two plays with which collected editions, including Dr. Wood's, begin – *Antonio and Mellida* and *Antonio's Revenge* – our first impression is likely to be one of bewilderment, that anyone could write plays so bad and that plays so bad could be preserved and reprinted. Yet they are not plays that one wholly forgets; and the second reading, undertaken perhaps out of curiosity to know why such bad plays are remembered, may show that the problem is by no means simple. One at first suspects Marston to have been a poet, with no inclination to the stage, but driven thereto by need, and trying to write to the popular taste; just as a fastidious writer of to-day may produce, under financial pressure, something which he vainly imagines to be a potential best-seller. There is one immediate objection to this theory, even before we have read Marston's later work. It is that there is better *poetry* in these two plays, both in several passages, quotable and quoted, and in the general atmosphere, than there is in the

Satires, *The Scourge of Villainy* or *Pygmalion*.[10] The last of these was apparently an attempt to repeat the success of *Venus and Adonis*, and deserves only the fate of every piece of writing which is an attempt to do again what has already been done by a better man.[11] The first are obviously lacking in personal conviction. The Satire, when all is said and done, is a form which the Elizabethans endeavoured to naturalize with very slight success; it is not until Oldham that a satire appears, sufficiently natural to be something more than a literary exercise. When Donne tries it, he is not any more successful than Marston; but Donne could write in no form without showing that he was a poet, and though his satires are not good satires, there is enough poetry in them, as in his epistles, to make them worth reading. Marston is very competent, and perfectly perfunctory. He wrote satires, as he wrote *Pygmalion*, in order to succeed; and when he found that the satire was more likely to lead him to the gaol than to success, he seems to have taken up, in the same spirit, the writing of plays. And however laboured the first two tragical plays may be, there is more poetry in them than in anything he had written before. So we cannot say that he was a "poet," forced by necessity to become a "dramatist."

The second observation upon *Antonio and Mellida* and its sequel, if we may call "sequel" a play of such different intent, is that their badness cannot be explained simply by incapacity, or even by plain carelessness. A blockhead could not have written them; a painstaking blockhead would have done better; and a careless master, or a careless dunce, would not have gone out of his way to produce the effects of nonsensicality which we meet. These two plays give the effect of work done by a man who was so exasperated by having to write in a form which he despised that he deliberately wrote worse than he could have written, in order to relieve his feelings. This may appear an over-ingenious apologetic; but it is difficult to explain, by any natural action of mediocrity, the absurd dialogue in peculiar Italian in which Antonio and Mellida suddenly express themselves in Act IV, Sc. i. The versification, such as it is, has for the most part no poetic merit; when it is most intelligible, as in the apostrophes of Andrugio, it is aiming at a conventional noble effect; but it has often, and more interestingly, a peculiar jerkiness and irritability, as of a writer who is, for some obscure reason, wrought to the pitch of exasperation. There are occasional reversions to an earlier vocabulary and movement, difficult to explain at the very end of the sixteenth century, reversions which to Ben Jonson must have seemed simple evidence of technical incompetence. As in the Prologue to *Antonio's Revenge*:

> The rawish dank of clumsy winter ramps
> The fluent summer's vein; and drizzling sleet
> Chilleth the wan bleak cheek of the numb'd earth,
> While snarling gusts nibble the juiceless leaves
> From the nak'd shuddering branch. . .

or the line at the beginning of Act [III]:

> The black jades of swart night trot foggy rings
> 'Bout heaven's brow. . . .[12]

It is not only in passages such as these that we get the impression of having to do with a personality which is at least unusual and difficult to catalogue. Marston's minor comic characters, in these two plays, are as completely lifeless as the major characters. Whether decent or indecent, their drollery is as far from mirth-provoking as can be: a continuous and tedious rattle of dried peas. And yet something is conveyed, after a time, by the very emptiness and irrelevance of this empty and irrelevant gabble; there is a kind of significant lifelessness in this shadow-show. There is no more unarticulated scarecrow in the whole of Elizabethan drama than Sir Jeffrey Balurdo. Yet Act V, Sc. i. of *Antonio's Revenge* leaves some impression upon the mind, though what it is we may not be able to say.

> Ho, who's above there, ho? A murrain on all proverbs. They say hunger breaks through stone walls; but I am as gaunt as lean-ribb'd famine, yet I can burst through no stone walls. O now, Sir Jeffrey, show thy valour, break prison and be hang'd. Nor shall the darkest nook of hell contain the discontented Sir Balurdo's ghost. Well, I am out well; I have put off the prison to put on the rope. O poor shotten herring, what a pickle art thou in! O hunger, how thou domineer'st in my guts! O for a fat leg of ewe mutton in stewed broth, or drunken song to feed on! I could belch rarely, for I am all wind. O cold, cold, cold, cold, cold. O poor knight! O poor Sir Jeffrey, sing like an unicorn before thou dost clip thy horn in the water of death. O cold, O sing, O cold, O poor Sir Jeffrey, sing, sing![13]

After this comes a highfalutin speech by Pandulpho, and cries of "Vindicta!" Balurdo, like the others, is so unreal that to deny his reality is to lend him too much existence; yet we can say of the scene, as of the play, that however bad it is no one but Marston could have written it.

The peculiar quality, which we have not attempted to define, is less evident in most of the plays which follow, just because they are better plays. The most considerable – setting aside his work of collaboration – are *The Malcontent*, *The Dutch Courtesan*, *The Insatiate Countess*, and *The Fawn*.[14] Of these, the last is a slight but pleasant handling of an artificial situation, a kind of Courtship of Miles Standish[15] in which the princess woos the prince who has come to sue on behalf of his father. The Insatiate Countess is a poor rival of the White Devil; her changes of caprice from lover to lover are rapid to the point of farce; and when the Countess, brought to the block for her sins, exclaims, in reply to the executioner's bidding of "Madam, put up your hair":

> O, these golden nets
> That have ensnared so many wanton youths,
> Not one but has been held a thread of life,
> And superstitiously depended on.
> Now to the block we must vail! What else?[16]

we may remark (if these lines are indeed Marston's) that we have known this sort of thing done better by another dramatist, and that it is not worth going to Marston for what Webster can give us. *The Dutch Courtesan* is a better play than either of these; Freevill and Malheureux behave more naturally than we expect of Marston's heroes; the Courtesan's villainy is not incredible or unmotivated, and her isolation is enhanced by her broken English; and the heroine, Beatrice, has some charming verses to speak and is not, according to the standards of that stage and age, preposterously mild and patient. Yet the play as a whole is not particularly "signed" by Marston; it is a theme which might have been handled as well, or better, by Dekker or Heywood. We are looking, not for plays of the same kind and in parts almost as good as those done by other dramatists. To prove that Marston is worth the attention of any but the Elizabethan scholar, we must convince the reader that Marston does something that no one else does at all: that there is a peculiar Marston tone, like the scent of a flower, which by its peculiarity sharpens our appreciation of the other dramatists as well as bringing appreciation of itself, as experiences of gardenia or zinnia refine our experience of rose or sweet-pea. With this purpose in mind, we may agree, with reservations, with the accepted view that *The Malcontent* is superior to any of the three other plays mentioned in the foregoing paragraph.

The superiority of *The Malcontent* does not lie altogether in more solid dramatic construction. The construction is hardly as close as that of *The Dutch Courtesan*, and the lighter passages have hardly the interest of underplot which, in the other play, we find in the pranks played by Cocledemoy at the expense of Mulligrub. Marston at best is not a careful enough playwright to deserve comparison with his better-known contemporaries on this score. He can commit the grossest carelessness in confusing his own characters. Even in *The Malcontent* there appears to be one such lapse. Several of the earlier scenes seem to depend for their point upon Bianca being the wife of Bilioso (a sort of prototype of the Country Wife);[17] but she is not so named in the list of characters, and the words of Ferneze to her in the last scene seem to indicate that Marston had forgotten this relationship.

Nor is the character of Malevole really comparable to that of Jacques. In the play of Shakespeare,[18] Jacques is surrounded by characters who by their contrast with him, and sometimes by their explicit remarks, criticize the point of view which he expresses – a point of view which is indeed an almost consciously adopted humour. And while a malcontent drawn by Jonson lacks the depth and the variety which Shakespeare can give by human contrasts, he at least preserves a greater degree of consistency than does Malevole. The whole part is inadequately thought out; Malevole is either too important or not important enough. We may suppose that he has assumed his role primarily as a disguise, and in order to be present at his usurper's court on the easy footing of a tolerated eccentric. But he has the difficult role of being both the detached cynic and the rightful prince biding his time. He takes pity on Ferneze (himself not a very satisfying character, as after his pardon in Act IV he lets the play down badly in Act V, Sc. iii. by his unseemly levity with Bianca). Yet Malevole, in his soliloquy in Act III, Sc. i., which is apparently not for the benefit of Bilioso but intended to express his true thoughts and feelings, alludes to himself as suffering from insomnia because he "'gainst his fate Repines and quarrels" – not a philosophical rôle, nor one to be expected of the magnanimous duke whom he has to be at the end. Whether his sarcasms are meant to be affected railing or savage satire, they fail of their effect.

Nor is any of the other characters very much alive. It is possible to find Dr. Harrison's praise of Maria, as a "virtuous and constant wife who is alive and interesting" [xi], to be excessive, and to find even Maquerelle deficient in liveliness. The virtue of *The Malcontent*, indeed, resides rather in its

freedom from the grosser faults to be expected of Marston than from any abundance of positive merits, when we hold it up to the standard, not of Shakespeare, but of the contemporaries of Shakespeare. It has no passages so moving as the confrontation of Beatrice and Franceschina in *The Dutch Courtesan*, and no comic element so sprightly as the harlequinades of Cocledemoy in the same play. It has, as critics have remarked, a more controlled and even diction. Swinburne does not elevate it to the position of Marston's best play; but he observes that

> the brooding anger, the resentful resignation, the impatient spirit of endurance, the bitter passion of disdain, which animate the utterance and direct the action of the hero, are something more than dramatically appropriate; it is as obvious that these are the mainsprings of the poet's own ambitions and dissatisfied intelligence, sullen in its reluctant submission and ardent in its implacable appeal, as that his earlier undramatic satires were the tumultuous and turbid ebullitions of a mood as morbid, as restless and as honest.[19]

We are aware, in short, with this as with Marston's other plays, that we have to do with a positive, powerful and unique personality. His is an original variation of that deep discontent and rebelliousness so frequent among the Elizabethan dramatists. He is, like some of the greatest of them, occupied in saying something else than appears in the literal actions and characters whom he manipulates.

It is possible that what distinguishes poetic drama from prosaic drama is a kind of doubleness in the action, as if it took place on two planes at once. In this it is different from allegory, to which the abstraction is something conceived, not something differently felt, and from symbolism (as in the plays of Maeterlinck) in which the tangible world is deliberately diminished – both symbolism and allegory being operations of the conscious planning[20†] mind. In poetic drama a certain apparent irrelevance may be the symptom of this doubleness; or the drama has an under-pattern, less manifest than the theatrical one. We sometimes feel, in following the words and behaviour of some of the characters of Dostoevsky, that they are living at once on the plane that we know and on some other plane of reality from which we are shut out: their behaviour does not seem crazy, but rather in conformity with the laws of some world that we cannot perceive. More fitfully, and with less power, this doubleness appears here and there in the work of Chapman, especially in the two *Bussy D'Ambois* plays.[21]

In the work of genius of a lower order, such as that of the author of *The Revenger's Tragedy*, the characters themselves hardly attain this double reality; we are aware rather of the author, operating perhaps not quite consciously through them, and making use of them to express something of which he himself may not be quite conscious.[22]

It is not by writing quotable "poetic" passages, but by giving us the sense of something behind, more real than any of his personages and their action, that Marston establishes himself among the writers of genius. There is one among his plays, not so far mentioned, and not, apparently, widely read or highly esteemed, which may be put forward with the claim that it is his best, and that it is the most nearly adequate expression of his distorted and obstructed genius: *The Wonder of Women*, otherwise *The Tragedy of Sophonisba*. This is a fairly late play in Marston's brief career, and we have reason to guess that the author himself preferred it to his others. As the "tragedy which shall boldly abide the most curious perusal,"[23] it gives the impression of being the play which Marston wrote most nearly to please himself. Bullen found it "not impressive," and even Swinburne reserves his praise for a few scenes. Yet the play has a good plot, is well constructed and moves rapidly. There are no irrelevances and no comic passages; it is austere and economical. The rapidity with which the too-scheming Carthaginians transfer their allegiance from Massinissa to Syphax, his rival suitor for Sophonisba, bringing about an alliance between Massinissa and Scipio, is not unplausible, and keeps the reader in a state of continuous excitement over the fortunes of war. The scene in which the witch Erictho takes on the form of Sophonisba in order to induce Syphax to lie with her, is by no means what Bullen would have it, a scene of gratuitous horror, introduced merely to make our flesh creep;[24] it is integral to the plot of the play; and is one of those moments of a double reality, in which Marston is saying something else, which evidence his poetic genius. And the memorable passages are not, as in his earlier plays, plums imbedded in suet; they may be taken as giving a fair taste of the quality of the whole play – e.g.

> though Heaven bears
> A face far from us, gods have most long ears;
> Jove has a hundred marble marble hands.[25]

> Nothing in Nature is unserviceable,
> No, not even inutility itself.

Is then for nought dishonesty in being?
And if it be sometimes of forcèd use,
Wherein more urgent than in saving nations? [II.i.56-60]

Our vows, our faith, our oaths, why they're ourselves. [II.i.84]
Gods naught foresee, but see, for to their eyes
Naught is to come or past; nor are you vile
Because the gods foresee; for gods, not we
See as things are; things are not as we see. [II.i.134-37]

(This last quotation reminds us of Meredith's line, "By their great memories the gods are known";[26] but Marston has the better of it. Swinburne, in spite of his ability to like almost any Elizabethan play that can be tolerated, is less than fair, when he calls *Sophonisba* "laboured and ambitious," and speaks of "jagged barbarisms and exotic monstrosities of metaphor"; and his derogatory quotation of the end of Act II does injustice to a passage which is acceptable enough in its context.)[27]

I do not praise gods' goodness, but adore;
Gods cannot fall, and for their constant goodness
(Which is necessitated) they have a crown
Of never-ending pleasures. . . . [III.ii.53-56]

The following has a distinct originality:

Where statues and Jove's acts were vively limn'd[28]
Boys with black coals draw the veil'd parts of nature,
And lecherous actions of imagin'd lust;
Where tombs and beauteous urns of well-dead men
Stood in assurèd rest, the shepherd now
Unloads his belly, corruption most abhorr'd
Mingling itself with their renownèd ashes. [IV.i.154-60]

The following has a fine Senecal ring:

My god's my arm; my life my heaven; my grave
To me all end. [V.ii.42-43]

And the last words of Sophonisba,

He that ne'er laugh'd may with a constant face
Contemn Jove's frown: happiness makes us base. [V.iii.91-92]

may be considered as a "classical" comparison to the "romantic" vein of Tourneur's

I think man's happiest when he forgets himself.[29]

It is hoped that the reader will see some justification for accumulating quotations from *Sophonisba*, and leaving the other plays unquoted. The quotations are intended to exhibit the exceptional consistency of texture of this play, and its difference of tone, not only from that of Marston's other plays, but from that of any other Elizabethan dramatist. In spite of the tumultuousness of the action, and the ferocity and horror of certain parts of the play, there is an underlying serenity; and as we familiarize ourselves with the play we perceive a pattern behind the pattern into which the characters deliberately involve themselves; the kind of pattern which we perceive in our own lives only at rare moments of inattention and detachment, drowsing in sunlight. It is the pattern drawn by what the ancient world called Fate; subtilized by Christianity into mazes of delicate theology; and reduced again by the modern world into crudities of psychological or economic necessity.

We may be asked to account, in giving this play such high place, for the fact that neither contemporary popularity nor the criticism of posterity yields any support. Well; it may be modestly suggested that in our judgments of Elizabethan plays in general we are very much influenced by Elizabethan standards. The fact that Shakespeare transcended all other poets and dramatists of the time imposes a Shakespearian standard: whatever is of the same kind of drama as Shakespeare's, whatever may be measured by Shakespeare, however inferior to Shakespeare's it may be, is assumed to be better than whatever is of a different kind. However catholic-minded we may be in general, the moment we enter the Elizabethan period we praise or condemn plays according to the usual Elizabethan criteria. Fulke Greville has never received quite his due; we approach Greville, and Daniel, with the assumption that they are "not in the main current." The minor poet who hitches his skiff astern of the great galleon has a better chance of survival than the minor poet who chooses to paddle by himself. Marston, in the one play on which he appears to have prided himself, is Senecal rather than Shakespearian. Had the great ship been that of a Corneille or a Racine, instead of a Shakespeare, Marston might cut a better figure now. He spent nearly the whole of his dramatic career writing a kind of drama against which we feel that he rebelled. In order to enjoy

the one play which he seems to have written to please himself, we should read Greville and Daniel, of his affinity with whom he was probably quite unconscious, and we should come to him fresh from Corneille and Racine. He would, no doubt, have shocked the French dramatists by his improprieties, and the English classicists as well: nevertheless, he should be with them, rather than with the Shakespearians.

NOTES

1. As printed in *SE*; originally published in *TLS*, 1695 (26 July 1934), [517]-518; rpt. with minor emendations in *EE* (1934) and in the second English edition of *SE* (1934).

2*. TSE's note: "*The Plays of John Marston*, in three volumes. Edited by H. Harvey Wood. Volume I (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, [1934] 8s. 6d. net each). *The Malcontent*. Edited by G. B. Harrison. The Temple Dramatists (Dent: [1933] 1s. 6d net)."

3. *The Works of John Marston*, ed. with intro. by A. H. Bullen, 3 vols (London: John C. Nimmo, 1887).

4. Though Marston's birth date remains unknown, his parents were married in Sept 1575 in Wardington, Oxfordshire, where he was baptized on 7 Oct 1576 (ODNB).

5. In 1618, Ben Jonson walked from London to Edinburgh, where he met and had conversations with William Drummond, who recorded them in notes not published until 1711. Drummond reports that Jonson "had many quarrells with Marston, beat him, & took his Pistol from him, wrote his Poetaster on him; the beginning of them were that Marston represented him in the stage, in his youth given to Venerie"; quoted by Wood in his introduction (xxv).

6. The satiric tragicomedy *Antonio and Mellida* (1602) is described on its title page as "The First Part" of "the Historie"; the revenge tragedy *Antonio's Revenge* (1602) is described as "The Second Part." *The Malcontent* was published in 1604.

7. Wood draws on the bibliographical work of Renaissance drama scholar W. W. Greg (1875-1959), who discusses the three quartos of the play and their relations in the *Transactions of the Bibliographical Society*, 2nd series, 2 (1922).

8†. Parenthetical phrase inserted in *EE* (1934).

9. See TSE's two reviews of the four-volume edition of Lucas's *The Complete Works of John Webster* (1928) (3.326-32; 3.425-30).

10. Marston wrote sixteen formal *Satires*, five included with the narrative poem *Pigmalion's Image* in *The Metamorphosis of Pigmalion's Image, and Satyres* (1598) and eleven in *The Scourge of Villainy* (1598, 1599).

11. Wood asserts in the introduction: "There is no doubt that in *Pigmalion's Image* Marston was trying his 'prentice hand at the licentious narrative poem, of which Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis* had in 1593 established the vogue. Marston's poem is in the same metre as Shakespeare's, and is not much more indelicate, but there the similarity rests" (xix).

12. In *SE*, TSE erroneously indicates act 2 as the source of the second quotation; he quotes from the prologue and the opening line of act 3, not from Wood's edition (69, 124) but from the modernized spelling as printed in vol 1 of Bullen's *The Works of John Marston* (99, 142).

13. *Antonio's Revenge* V.i.1-16, as printed in vol 1 of Bullen's edition of *The Works of John Marston* (179).

14. *The Dutch Courtesan* was published in 1605; *Parasitaster; or, The Fawn* in 1606; *The Insatiate Countess* in 1613. TSE compares the Insatiate Countess to the protagonist of John Webster's *The White Devil; or, Vittoria Corombona* (1612).

15. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's narrative poem of colonial America, *The Courtship of Miles Standish* (1858), in which Standish and John Alden both attempt to woo Priscilla Mullins.

16. *The Insatiate Countess* V.i.202-06, as printed in vol 3 of Bullen's edition of *The Works of John Marston* (232). Modern scholarship regards the play as a problematic composite of contributions by Marston, William Barkstead, and Lewis Machin, with act 5, scene 1 as Marston's original work, partially revised by Barkstead and Machin.

17. Mrs. Margery Pinchwife, in William Wycherley's *The Country Wife: A Comedy* (1751).

18. *As You Like It* (ca. 1599).

19. Swinburne, *The Age of Shakespeare* (London: Harper, 1908), 125.

20†. In *TLS*: alarming

21. TSE first discusses the double planes of reality in Dostoevsky and Chapman in "A Neglected Aspect of Chapman" (2.548).

22. *The Revenger's Tragedy* (1607), then attributed to Cyril Tourneur, since generally recognized as the work of Thomas Middleton; TSE discusses the play and its attribution in "Cyril Tourneur" (4.197).

23. Marston announces in a note "To the Reader" in the second quarto of his comedy, *Parasitaster; or, The Fawn*: "Comedies are writ to be spoken, not read; remember the life of these things consists in action; and for such courteous survey of my pen, I will present a Tragedy [*Sophonisba*] which shall boldly abide the most curious perusal."

24. "For hideous blood-curdling realism," writes Bullen in his introduction to vol 1, "the description of the witch Erictho and her cave is . . . without a parallel in literature. Tough as whipcord must have been the nerves of an audience which could listen patiently to the recital of Erictho's atrocities. . . . Regarded, however, as a whole, the play is not impressive" (xliv-xlv).

25. *The Wonder of Women; or, The Tragedy of Sophonisba* (1606) II.i.49-52. This and the following quotations from the play are from vol 3 of Bullen's edition of *The Works of John Marston*.

26. From Meredith's poem "France" (1870), concluding lines of stanza V: "the Gods alone / Remember everlastingly: they strike / Remorselessly, and ever like for like. / By their great memories the Gods are known."

27. *The Age of Shakespeare*, 117. "It would be difficult to find anywhere," he continues, "a more preposterous or disjointed piece of jargon than the speech of Asdrubal at the close of the second act" (118).

28. Bullen holds to "vively limn'd," glossing the phrase in a note as "drawn to the life," against editors who emended to "lively limn'd."

29. *The Revenger's Tragedy* IV.iv: Vindice to his mother, Gratiana, who replies: "I'll give you this: that one I never knew / Plead better for and 'gainst the devil, than you" (120).

The Problem of Education

Harvard Advocate, 121 (Freshman Number 1934) 11-12[1]

At the present time I am not very much interested in the only subject which I am supposed to be qualified to write about: that is, one kind of literary criticism. I am not very much interested in literature, except dramatic literature; and I am largely interested in subjects which I do not yet know very much about: theology, politics, economics, and education. I am moved at the moment to say something on the last of these subjects; so, if my comments appear very scrappy, I can only say that it is hard to start one's own education over again when one is in the forties. I have had some practical experience of education; first, having been educated myself, and in my opinion very badly. Second, I have taught boys of all ages in English schools; I was once an assistant in the Philosophy Department at Harvard; I have conducted Adult Education classes, and I have lectured at Cambridge in England and Cambridge in Massachusetts.[2] I mention these facts because they are what might be considered credentials. But I do not feel that I have learned very much except to appreciate the magnitude of the educational problem. A great many men have taught for many more years than I, and yet are no more qualified to make any general statements about education. Indeed, most of the people engaged in educating seem to have very little conception of the general problem of education for a race and a nation, or of what purpose in a general scheme their own work is serving. They are merely Ford operatives. As for the big executives of education, I suspect that many of them have their minds filled with unexamined assumptions. Yet after feeding and clothing and housing people, the problem of how they should be educated is the most important you have, and perhaps the most difficult. Wherever you begin, you are led on to everything else. The problem of education leads you out to every other, and every other problem leads you back to education.

If what I am concerned about was merely the local problem, the question of what kind of education we ought to have in England, or in America, I should feel certainly that I am too ignorant to have the right to say anything. But I do not consider that there is one problem of education in America and another in England. However different the present systems

may appear, I am sure that fundamentally we have one problem, at least in all English speaking countries, and that the things which alarm or depress me in America are equally present and alarming or depressing in England. English education is changing just as American education is changing: with only the trifling difference that the former seems to be going to the devil rather more slowly. The provincial universities, in any case, have much the same problem as the state universities of America: what sort of an education to give when the population to be educated includes almost everybody.

The chief persisting advantages of Oxford and Cambridge over American universities are (1) theological (2) economic.

I cannot attempt to demonstrate here that education, as the finest training of the finest minds, in contrast to the general education of everybody or the special technical training of persons to fill definite social needs, cannot afford to be separated from religion. But I am certain that the theological background – however far back it may be – is the only one that can provide the idea of order and unity needed for education. And I believe that if education is not rearranged by people with some definite social philosophy and some notion of the true vocation of man, the only education to be had will be in seminaries and colleges run by Jesuits. There is a good one in St. Louis, Mo.[3] Incidentally, the only two men I know who have had what seemed to me hopeful theories of education and put them into practice, are Father Herbert Kelly of the Society of the Sacred Mission in Nottinghamshire, and Canon Iddings Bell of Providence, Rhode Island. I have no first-hand acquaintance with Canon Bell's frustrated attempts at St. Stephen's College, Annandale; and Father Kelly's system was designed for theological students; but I know of no other ventures in higher education of equal interest to these.[4]

The leading American universities were, of course, originally directed by clergy of definite denominations. They now suffer from the dreadful blight of non-sectarianism, which means substituting a vague Christianity which the modern mind despises, for a precise Christianity which it may hate but must respect. Oxford and Cambridge are to a large extent atheist, but they remain in structure and ceremony foundations belonging to the Church of England. They may lose religion altogether, in time, but they are hardly likely to become non-sectarian; one feels, in their precincts, the sharp division of clerical and anti-clerical which is beneficial to both.

The American universities struck me, in contrast to Oxford and Cambridge, appallingly centralised in administration. That however is not

the economic advantage of the latter universities that I have in mind. The English colleges own property; and much of their property is still that kind of property which is the least ignoble to possess: land. The ownership of land in England by individuals is now discouraged by Estate Duties, but ownership of land by colleges is still tolerated.[5] The riches of the Oxford and Cambridge colleges do not, for the most part, consist in shares or debentures of fluctuating or doubtful value. Consequently the two older universities of England are on the whole independent of millionaires.[6] Neither are their methods easily pliable to the theories of any one powerful administrator, like the late President Eliot.[7] A Vice-Chancellor, or the Head of a House, does not have to spend much of his time begging for endowments; nor would he have unlimited control over their use when received. In fact, the two older English universities are not quite so dependent upon an industrial aristocracy as the American: they sprang from and flourished in conditions older than capitalism, and they can perhaps survive it.

When I have mentioned these advantages, and that fact that a classical education, although no longer imposed, is still regarded as normal, I have stated what seem to me the essentials. The other advantages of Oxford and Cambridge are in comparison trivial or irrelevant. I should not care to see American universities imitating Oxford and Cambridge, even to the wormholes in the system.

Of course there are many details which might be examined. But whom do you want to educate? The answer will depend upon your conception of a good society; and so will the sort of education you want to give. The answers depend upon your notion of the place of man in the world, of the relation of a supernatural order, if any, to the natural; they depend upon our answers to all the questions which we tacitly agree not to raise, when we discuss educational matters. You may have a notion of the understanding of certain things as valuable in itself, so that you want a few people in every generation to be educated to understand and value and preserve them. Or you may have a notion of the kind of society you want, and concentrate upon whatever seems to subserve the interests of that society. Or you may have a vague notion that a university "education" confers a social degree, and proceed to overrun the country with gentlemen. Instead we assume at the same time that education is for those individuals who are fine enough to deserve it, that it is for the upper classes, that it is to make everybody a member of the upper classes, that everybody is entitled to the

same education, that education is something to give one an advantage over the uneducated, and that education is going to make it possible to get a good job, according to whatever be our notion of goodness in jobs. But once you start to think about education you must go on thinking about your whole social system, and about politics and economics and theology. At any rate I am glad to think that all these subjects in which I am uneducated but interested are fundamentally related.

T. S. ELIOT, HARVARD ADVOCATE, '10

NOTES

1. Written between 13 Jan and Aug. TSE wrote to Hugh Wade on 13 Jan 1934: "I can't be impresario and critic at once; perhaps when I retire from publishing etc. if the public cant discriminate (and it cant) I cant help it. But I *might* make a few mild remarks about the educational system esp. teaching of English; England just as diseased but the pustules have not appeared yet. I suppose I shall get round to subscribing to the *Advocate* eventually." TS in Houghton (bMS Am1691.3).

2. TSE worked as a schoolteacher for a term at High Wycombe Grammar School in 1915-16 and then at Highgate Junior School until the end of 1916. He was appointed as assistant in Philosophy at Harvard in 1912. Between 1916 and 1919, he gave a series of Extension lectures on modern French and English literature under the auspices of the Oxford University Extension Delegacy and the University of London Extension Board. He delivered the Clark Lectures at Trinity College, Cambridge in 1926. During his terms as Norton Professor of Poetry at Harvard, TSE gave a series of lectures in the spring of 1933 entitled "English 26: English Literature from 1890 to the Present Day."

3. Saint Louis University, founded in 1818, is a private, Jesuit university located in St. Louis, Missouri.

4. Herbert Hamilton Kelly (1860-1950) founded in 1893 the Society of the Sacred Mission, an Anglican religious order and later a theological college for Church of England priests based in the village of Kelham, near Nottingham, which TSE visited regularly in the 1930s.

Reverend Bernard Iddings Bell (1886-1958), American educator, writer, and churchman, was the warden of St. Stephen's College until he resigned in 1933. TSE wrote to F. R. Leavis on 26 Sept 1934: "I wonder if you have heard anything about his educational experiment at St. Stephen's College New York, which was finally stamped out by Nicholas Murray Butler." He printed Canon Bell's article "The Decay of Intelligence in America" in the *Criterion* of Jan 1935 and wrote in his "Commentary": "Canon Bell was for some years the head of a college which he ran in a way opposed to the general tendencies of the time; a college which, I imagine, has altered its character since he left it" (5.151).

5. Estate duty was a transfer tax levied on inherited property and assets.

6. In his Jan 1938 "Commentary," TSE expresses concern about the consequences of the benefactions to Oxford University by Lord Nuffield (5.589).

7. Charles William Eliot, TSE's distant cousin, was elected President of Harvard University in 1869. He introduced a program of fundamental reforms, including the replacement of the required courses for undergraduates with the elective system. In "Modern Education and the Classics" (1936), TSE criticized President Eliot's reforms: "American universities, ever since Charles William Eliot and his contemporary 'educators,' have tried to make themselves as big as possible in a mad competition for numbers" (5.339).

To the Editor of *Social Credit*

Social Credit: A Journal of Economic Democracy, 1 (7 Sept 1934) 45

Sir, – Economics is a subject I have never been able to understand, but I suspect that one reason why I cannot understand it is that orthodox economics rests upon moral assumptions which I could not possibly accept, if they were laid bare. The moral foundations of Communism and Fascism seem to me equally unacceptable, and their economic and monetary theories, if any, do not seem to me to differ very interestingly from the old theories. Furthermore, while I do not pretend that I understand Major Douglas's theory yet, I cannot see that his opponents are in a strong position, so long as they continue to support a system which simply does not work.[1]

Yours sincerely,
T. S. ELIOT

AUGUST 27TH, 1934.

NOTE

1. C. H. Douglas formulated the economic philosophy known as "Social Credit." His article "Propaganda and Practice" appeared in the first issue of the journal (17 Aug 1934, 5), which is subtitled "The Official Organ of the Social Credit Secretariat." The editor, B. J. Boothroyd, wrote to TSE on 6 Sept to thank him for the letter, "part of which I have published in this week's issue"; the full letter is untraced. In *Harvard College Class of 1910: Seventh Report* (June 1935), TSE listed Social Credit among his hobbies (5.247). His copy of Douglas's *Social Credit* (1924), with marked passages and dog-eared pages, is in his library.

A Commentary

The Criterion: A Literary Review, 14 (Oct 1934) 86-90

The annual report of the National Trust for Places of Historic Interest or Natural Beauty grows yearly more impressive.[1] The map of England and Wales is dotted with preserves of the National Trust, the greatest success being apparently in the Lake District.[2] And what is remarkable, and most commendable, is the fact that the work has been done by the labour and the benefactions of a considerable number of persons.[3] The total of donations, to the end of 1933, appears to be under three hundred and fifteen thousand pounds,[4] and the list includes a great many individuals; a few years ago, a single American millionaire could have provided the whole sum. It would seem that the kind of work that the National Trust does in preservation has appealed to a general public spirit which is the best assurance of its continuation. Eminent persons so different as Lord Curzon (representing Historic Interest) and Viscount Grey (representing Natural Beauty) have supported it;[5] it has had the invaluable advertisement of the impressive photographs of threatened districts which appear in *The Times*;[6] but what is most important is that it has obviously stirred the feelings of a very large number of people.

I do not in any way depreciate the value of the National Trust, or belittle the generosity of those who have given labour, money and land, in suggesting that the existence of such a society as a permanent and important institution in the country gives rise to curious reflections which may be worth examination. Surely we are living in a very odd and unsatisfactory state of society, when such a struggle has to be carried on to preserve England from destruction and disfigurement. For what is the process going on, the existence of which is tacitly assumed by these worthy efforts? Does it lead to the eventual partition of England into two parts, one overrun and ravaged by human beings, and the other protected from human beings; and are the members of the National Trust satisfied that all is well in proportion to the extent of England which can be acquired for "preserves"? It is excellent to do what we can in the present state of affairs; but it would be better that those who are making such generous efforts, and who are therefore in a position to come to think in more general terms, should not content their

hearts and consciences with the thought that this is all that needs doing. For when such work has to be done, we must acknowledge that we are interfering, in a way never before attempted in history, with natural development; and when natural development has to be interfered with, ought we not to look a little deeper and try to do something about the "nature" which develops in such an unpleasant way?

What we should be interested to read, besides a list of the properties so far acquired, and some knowledge of their beauties or historical importance, is a detailed account of what, in each case, the several properties have been preserved *from*. What would have happened to the properties? How many of them would have been developed in a reasonable way to satisfy just needs, and how many for purposes which have no justification anywhere? Sometimes, no doubt, the sites have been wanted for putting up houses which could just as well be put up round the corner. But we want to form some notion of the nature of the forces which we may expect to be active in destruction of the beauty of England in the future. We want to know how much is accounted for by causes such as the increase of the population; how much by vandalism; how much by "speculative building";[7] how much may be attributed to fundamental defects in the social system. We should like to know the part played by Estate Duties, and whether anything ought to be done about that.[8] The existence of such an institution as the National Trust, and the present necessity for its existence, seems to me to imply some pretty drastic criticism of contemporary society; and we should like all the people interested in the preservation of "beauty spots" to investigate a state of society in which beauty spots have to be preserved.

It is difficult to be quite whole-hearted in one's support of the National Trust, until one is able to answer such questions. For one thing, we do not want to feel that we are protecting beauty spots against the needs of the people. And for another, the amount of preserving that could be done is quite indefinite. Some parts of England are more beautiful than others; some, because of their natural configuration, are quite exceptional; but there is very little of rural England that is not beautiful and worthy of protection. Some of the wilder and more romantic spots may be quite unsuited for tilth, grazing, or other legitimately profitable uses; these are rightly to be protected against the hotel on the hilltop, the week-end bungalow on the slope, the "roadhouse" in the valley, the golf course on the downs, the pavilion on the beach. But the beauty of England is not primarily that of the more remote hills and moors which men have not yet found it worth

their while to disfigure, but is to be found in the ordinary countryside which is largely the work of generations of humanizing labour. And if this cannot be preserved, and preserved *alive*, it is of small good that the land should be dotted with little museums of scenery.

Again, with regard to the preservation of buildings of "historic interest." They are not worth preserving because they are "interesting." They are worth preserving because they give a conscious reminder of the traditions of a people; and by traditions I do not mean its vainglories, its conceit of itself in its past; but the fact that it has grown in one way and not in another, and that its future growth is determined in certain directions, if any, by its having grown in that way through the past: by the things which are a cause of regret and shame, as well as those which may be a cause for pride. And they are still more worth preserving because of their unconscious effect upon those who live among them. But an accumulation of old buildings, however beautiful, means death unless we can also make beautiful new buildings. Old buildings are dead in so far as we put them to a different use than that for which they were intended. If Christianity disappeared, it would be more sensible to destroy all the churches in England than to preserve them as monuments. (It seems to me inconsistent with the principles of communism to leave standing a building like the Kremlin.)[9] But an age and a society which is sure of itself – not self-consciously cocksure – will neither destroy too much nor preserve too much. Excessive and purposive destruction implies that we deny our natural dependence upon the past, upon the bad as well as the good in it; and excessive preservation implies our lack of confidence in ourselves. While supporting the work of the National Trust so far as it goes, I am apprehensive lest it help to engender a lack of confidence in the future, and consequently a neglect of action about the future. You must have humility, and you must have conviction. Humility and conviction should express our attitude towards the past and towards the future. But for humility people are apt to put defeatism, and for conviction cockiness.

Such work as that of the National Trust seems to belong to a transitional period of society. Either society will somehow rearrange itself in such a way that whatever ought to be preserved exactly as it is, will be in no danger; or the whole business of artificial conservation will be taken over by the State. The latter event is much the more probable, the former the more desirable. The former would require a very different economic basis, and a

healthy, settled agriculture, with a proper balance between town and country life; the latter only requires that things continue in their present direction towards State control of everything.

Certain types of building very likely belong to a state of society which we have left behind. The huge country manor, the large town mansion, will very likely disappear except where their beauty or historical value makes their preservation, as some sort of public institutions, desirable. But much of the change of a destructive kind which we are concerned to combat, seems to result from the over-development of town life and the atrophy of the country. It is from a population habituated to town life, a population to which the countryside represents holidays, whether on an elaborate or a simple scale, that the countryside has to be protected, rather than from those to whom the country means the scene of their daily work and life. And it is the continuous rearrangement of towns to accommodate larger numbers of people with different standards of living than the previous generation, and the efforts of private interests to make money by providing for these larger and more vulgarized populations, that occasion the destruction of buildings of dignity in towns. No one will deny that the central part of London has been growing progressively uglier during the present century. Change is inevitable and necessary; but it is a pity that so many of the most noticeable changes should be made solely for reasons of private profit – and that others should be dependent upon the vagaries of a body like the London County Council. You cannot content yourself, in London, with merely collecting sums to preserve bits here and there. Here, obviously, the problem of preservation cannot be separated from the problem of intelligent building. And for the intelligent appreciation of both problems, we must aim to get at some real understanding of the changes which are taking place in society, an understanding which will distinguish between those which are inevitable and those which should be combated, between those which are beneficial and those which are pernicious. It is as important – to take questions which are actual – to plan wisely for the future development of the Surrey Bank,[10] and to see that the new suburbs in Middlesex[11] are properly provided with parks and gardens and arranged so that they may grow to be communities, as it is to preserve any part of rural England, or any number of historic monuments. And in this context we have to ask the question whether it is desirable that the large towns should become larger; whether it is healthy that the mind of the whole nation should become

urban. And in asking such questions we are questioning all the assumptions of our society for many generations past.

T.S.E.

NOTES

1. *Thirty-Ninth Annual Report for the Year Ending 30th June, 1934*. The National Trust for Places of Historic Interest or Natural Beauty (London: The National Trust. Pp. 15 + 195, with 8 illustrations and fold-out map). The organization commonly referred to as the National Trust was founded in 1895 with the intention of conserving properties such as historic buildings and significant landscapes. The annual report for 1933-34 boasted of seventeen newly acquired properties along with "valuable additions" to ten properties purchased earlier (1).

2. In an inset detailing roughly twenty-five square miles, the map included at the end of the report specifies thirty-three properties within the Lake District.

3. The list of benefactors, members, corresponding members, and affiliated societies takes up thirty-six pages of the report. The list of subscribers and smaller donors takes up another thirty-seven pages.

4. The figure of ca. £315,000 does not appear in the balance sheet of the report. The total donations figure is £321,103. TSE has presumably subtracted from this total £6,207 – which is marked as coming from the General Endowment, and thus not from individual donations – to arrive at £314,896, or nearly £315,000.

5. Conservative statesman, author, and art collector George Nathaniel Curzon, Marquess Curzon (1859-1925) bought and restored two castles, later bequeathing them to the National Trust.

Liberal statesman and author Sir Edward Grey, 3rd Baronet (after 1916, called 1st Viscount Grey of Fallodon) (1862-1933), was an enthusiastic outdoorsman and supporter of the National Trust, which created the title of Vice-President of the Trust to honor him; three of Grey's books were on the topics of recreation, birds, and fishing. After his death, Ros Castle Camp in Northumberland was presented to the National Trust in 1936 as a memorial to Grey. The annual report under discussion begins with a tribute to the recently deceased patron.

6. In the *Times* of 6 Dec 1933, under the title "The South Downs / Brighton and the Motor Track," Lord Zetland, chairman of the National Trust, wrote to support protests against a scheme to lease a large tract of the South Downs for motor racing, a scheme "which must inevitably go far towards destroying those features which give these stretches of typically English country their peculiar charm and . . . a very special value" (10). Lord Zetland also urged the preservation of "Queen Anne Houses at Clapham" (12 May 1934), 8; "Britain's Country Houses" (20 July 1934), 9; accepted a new "Electric Pump for Village Well" in Toys Hill, Kent (17 Sept 1934), 9; and announced the recent "Dovedale Gift to Nation" – the Fishpond Plantation and fifty acres of land near Lode Mill in Dovedale (31 Oct 1934), 11.

7. Speculative building, the practice of building structures prior to securing tenants or owners in anticipation of profit, became a boom industry in England during the mid-nineteenth century and followed spikes in urban population growth through the 1930s and 1940s. As TSE's scare quotes imply, this practice was widely regarded as both a social ill and an aesthetic problem. To maximize profit, speculative builders often created low-quality and, at worst, unsafe housing

that resulted in slum conditions, particularly in the growing suburbs outside of city centers. Critics also lamented the utilitarian, uniform design employed by speculative builders and worried that the spread of these structures would irreversibly mar the picturesque quality of English towns, especially as housing sprawl extended into the countryside.

8. Codified in the Finance Act of 1894, the single Estate Duty replaced a complicated system of five different inheritance taxes that used to be levied on an estate. Subsequent Finance Acts (especially 1907 and 1909-19) escalated the scale of duties. These increased inheritance taxes are usually held to be the cause of the breaking up of large estates in the early twentieth century, though there were other financial realignments, such as the People's Budget (1909-10) of Asquith's Liberal government, which signaled a general turn toward social welfare programs and significantly higher taxes on the wealthy.

9. Formerly the residence of the tsars, the Kremlin is a fortified complex of buildings in Moscow. After the Russian Revolution in 1917, it became the seat of the Soviet government. While some of the Kremlin's religious buildings – such as the Chudov Monastery and the Ascension convent – were destroyed to make room for new construction, some other churches and cathedrals were left standing in their damaged state or preserved as museums, though all were secularized in conformity with state atheism.

10. This appears to be a slip for South Bank, given TSE's reference to the London County Council, which proposed the development of the South Bank project and which was prominent in the news. *The Times* of 7 Apr 1934 (14) has a half-page photograph titled "London's River Frontage: Development of the South Bank": "The Recent letter to *The Times* in which the Ecclesiastical Commissioners pointed out that they were no longer able to delay their scheme for the development of their property on the south bank of the Thames near Hungerford Bridge has again brought into prominence the great possibilities afforded by this river frontage. This picture [shows] the area on which the commissioners are proposing to build tenements." A subsequent article, "Improvement of London / L.C.C. Proposals for South Bank" (16 July 1934), 9, regarding a proposal to spend 1.5 million pounds for land between County Hall and Waterloo Bridge, "to lay out gardens if possible, and to develop the rest of the land acquired to best advantage. . . . the area adjacent to the south bank of the river between Westminster and Waterloo Bridges is overdue for re-development appropriate to its important geographical position. Its present unsightly appearance is unworthy of its unique position on the river in the heart of London." Further articles on the South Bank development appearing on 17, 23, and 25 July suggest that this may be what TSE was referring to in preparing his "Commentary," which he usually completed a month to six weeks before the issue appeared.

11. Situated to the north of the Thames, the administrative county of Middlesex was created in 1889, though its name and some of its territory date back to the Anglo-Saxon period. Because of population growth and suburban building schemes – abetted by expanding public transport – London suburbs were slowly absorbing Middlesex. By 1934, the time of Eliot's "Commentary," the last four of its remaining rural districts had been abolished, and the entire county consisted of urban districts and municipal boroughs. By 1965, most of what had been Middlesex was incorporated into Greater London.

Religious Drama and the Church

Rep [*Magazine of the Westminster and Croydon Repertory Theatres*], 1 (Oct 1934) 4-5[1]

The possibility of a religious drama depends upon a kind of reciprocity. The dramatists must be able to provide a drama which will be really useful to the Church; and the Church must be ready to make itself useful to those who want to write drama. When I say the Church, I am thinking primarily of those in authority, but I imply also the goodwill of the laity. For the audience must be willing to learn from the playwrights, and the playwrights must be willing to learn from the audience.

I do not think (with all due respect) that religious drama has much to gain from those dramatists, even if they are also poets, who have already established their reputation, and who occasionally consent, out of good nature or an efflux of piety, to write a religious play to order. Plays produced by such writers with such motives may easily have only a superficial varnish of religious interest, or may be sentimental embroidery on conventional Biblical themes, or may innocently present the most dubious theology. The development of religious drama depends upon its being able to appeal, as a task, to the self-interest of younger men who are anxious to write for the theatre.

There are, among the younger poets to-day, several who are definitely interested in the theatre; I think there is even a tendency to regard dramatic form as the consummation of poetic activity. The causes of this tendency are probably complex and are to be found in the social changes which have taken place within our memory. I shall not attempt to explore them; but assuming that a poet to-day wants to write for the theatre, where will he find an opportunity? On the commercial stage there is obviously no opening. The commercial stage has to appeal to the lowest common middle-class denominator, to an audience with no dignified beliefs to give it cohesion, and with the smallest minimum of moral convictions of any kind. Even the plays of Mr. Shaw are too good to be nowadays really successful; I should imagine that Mr. Noel Coward has about all the intelligence and sensibility that a successful dramatist can afford to be encumbered with. A few years ago Mr. Aldous Huxley produced a play (*The World of Light*) which, although founded of course upon a thin and sandy philosophy, had

considerable intellectual and dramatic merit: it ran lamely for six weeks; it was taken off, that is to say, at about the moment when plays like *Autumn Crocus* or *Escape Me Never* (both written by women) are just beginning to show promise of triumphant longevity.[2] Mr. Huxley made the mistake of trying to appeal to the "theatre-goers" with something much beyond their intelligence and sensibility. I doubt whether there is anything to be done with the contemporary theatre-going public: you have got to assemble new audiences.

The young dramatist to-day, however, does not want to write a play merely to please a small audience of poetry-lovers many of whom he will know, and the faces of the rest of whom he remembers having seen before and is tired of seeing. The best opportunity that presents itself seems to be the opportunity to appeal to those who are interested in a common cause which the poet and dramatist can also serve. Only a cause can give the bond, the common assumptions between author and audience, which the serious dramatist needs. (This accounts perhaps for the relative *importance* of Mr. Shaw's plays at a period which younger people to-day will not remember, and for the unimportance of a new play by Mr. Shaw now: he is no longer serving any cause which is actual for us). There are only two causes now of sufficient seriousness, and they are mutually exclusive: the Church and Communism.

People are born, doubtless, with more or less dramatic talent; but it is certain that this talent will never come to anything without hard work, without a good deal of humbleness and readiness to learn from both producers and actors; without a good deal of give and take, and a willingness, within limits of conscience, to produce what is wanted even if it is not quite what one wants to produce. The writer with dramatic ambitions must be ready to co-operate; but the co-operation that we should get with commercial producers, the kind of lessons that we should learn from professional producers and professional actors, most of whom are quite unable to declaim any kind of verse, is not exactly the kind of co-operation that we want. Religious drama, if those responsible for its production see their opportunity, has a good deal to offer. It has definite limitations: and to see what one can do within a given framework is always stimulating. It can employ actors who have no experience of the professional stage, and who therefore *may*, now and again, be able to pronounce verse properly. It must, for the most part, be capable of being inexpensively produced, which suits our needs, because we do not want our words to be distorted by actors with

star personalities or eclipsed by magnificent scenery and costume. And the writer of religious drama may have the satisfaction of breaking the religious conventions in order to expose the religious reality; though he will have to remember that the majority of his audience may be Christians from the surface in, rather than from the centre out, and that a little Biblical pageantry, voiced with a few ambling pentameters, is all that they will come prepared for.

If anything is to be made of religious drama in England, the clergy must help to prepare their faithful – both as spectators and as participants – to understand that there is a common cause to be served, and that the writer also is serving, rather than performing a charity or pursuing a reputation. The appreciation of poetry among members of the Church of England leaves much to be desired. The writer of religious drama must be allowed a considerable degree of liberty and experiment – we have not to paraphrase the mystery plays but to devise new forms. On the other hand, the Church should demand of the men of letters who wish to contribute to its drama, that they have an adequate knowledge of theology; and it should not tolerate the promulgation of unsound doctrine by great poets, or even by poets of great reputation. The Bolsheviks, who apparently take a keen interest in literature, ask no less in the matter of orthodoxy.

I am not suggesting that the future of the drama in England is to be looked for only in churches, in church-halls, and in theatres hired for church-benefit performances. I am only suggesting that it will be for the common benefit if the Church will employ poets, as well as architects, artists and musicians.[3] The plastic arts, incidentally, are in a state of collapse, because of their economic dependence upon a capitalistic prosperity which has become less dependable; and they suffered indeed in their quality from this dependence. The Church has the opportunity, greater now than in the period of industrial expansion, of gathering to itself, of educating and spiritualising, all the potential forces of civilisation. And these forces, gathered in the Church, will consequently radiate out from it. So that we may perhaps come to a time, in which a play as fundamentally Christian and Catholic as *Polyeucte* may be written and may be performed successfully to audiences which will not be consciously attending a "religious play," because they will be imbued with the Christian and Catholic way of feeling, even when they ask only to be entertained.[4]

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. Written between June and Sept 1934 in response to the editor John Garrett's request for an article on "the alliance of religion and drama." TSE responded on 25 May: "What I would like to do for you would be merely a note on my own opinion, as to the lines which such drama ought to follow in the future. I mean that the John Masefield or the Gordon Bottomley sort of thing is, in my opinion, not what is needed at the present time, and that something much more vigorous and contemporary is needed: but the possible audiences, I am afraid, require a good deal of education."

2. Huxley's play *The World of Light: A Comedy in Three Acts* (1931) opened at the Royalty Theatre in London on 30 Mar 1931. *Autumn Crocus*, a play by the English playwright and novelist Dorothy "Dodie" Smith (1896-1990) written under the pseudonym of C. L. Anthony, opened at the Lyric Theatre in London on 6 Apr 1931, with such popular success that additional seats were added to the stalls; it was adapted as a film in 1934. The play *Escape Me Never* by Margaret Kennedy (1896-1967), based on her novel *The Fool of the Family* (1930), opened at the Opera House in Manchester on 21 Nov 1933, followed by a successful run of 232 performances at the Apollo Theatre in the London West End; it was adapted as a film in 1935, remade in 1947.

3. TSE first suggested this relationship between the church and contemporary artists in "If I Were a Dean" (1931) (4.296).

4. *Polyeucte martyr* (1641) is a tragedy in five acts by Pierre Corneille based on the life of the martyr Saint Polyeuctus. TSE wrote to George Bell, Bishop of Chichester, on 20 July 1935: "I am aware that without your initiative and support I should not have had the most valuable opportunities of writing *The Rock* and *Murder in the Cathedral*. But I feel that what I should try now would be 'religious drama' somewhat in the sense of, let me say without appearance of being over-ambitious, *Polyeucte*."

What Does the Church Stand For?

The Spectator, 153 (19 Oct 1934) 560-61

I observe that the propounder of the question "What does the Church stand for?" in your columns uses the terms "Church" and "Churches" interchangeably (he speaks of "different branches of the Christian Churches"), and this raises a doubt in my mind as to what point of view, at least for the purpose of the moment, he is maintaining. And it is very difficult to reply to any criticism of the Church which is made from an unspecified point of view.[1] To discuss the shortcomings of the Church with another person who is inside it is one thing; to defend the existence of the Church against those who are outside of it is quite another. The Church is not a public institution on the same footing as, let us say, the Water Board – an institution the proper functions of which can be discussed by all members of the community on the same assumptions. I cannot conceive such a discussion as you have initiated taking place in a Latin country, where people are either inside the Church or outside; it can take place here because the Church of England is in a vague way accepted by your "man in the street" as a *kind* of national institution, something maintained, as he supposes, at the public expense, something which has an obligation towards him, although he is unaware of any obligation towards *it*.[2] It is something, of course, that he should feel that the Church should be concerned with *him*. But the man who is neither inside the Church nor outside is a person who has thought nothing out, and therefore a person with whom discussion is impossible; we can consider for purposes of argument only those who hold the Christian Faith, and those who (without necessarily being hostile) hold some other beliefs equally positive.

It is easy to admit, in the abstract, that there must be a profound difference not only between the theories, or between a few ideas which are from time to time consciously in the mind, but between the whole process of life, of those who believe in Christian Revelation of the supernatural order and those who do not. Both classes of people may underestimate the difference. We are apt to assume that we all, at least of one nation and language, have so to speak a large bookful of working beliefs in common, codes of conduct and manners and feeling; and that the Churchman simply has

something more, a kind of *appendix* to the book, called Christianity, which contains some more beliefs to which the other man does not subscribe. But from the Christian point of view the appendix is the book, and the book the appendix; and for him even the appendix is not quite the same. You do not carry on business in the same way; you do not make investments with the same convictions; for the matter of that, you do not make love in the same way, or enjoy good wine in the same way. I know that I am thinking of the ideal Christian, who might be a St. Francis, and of the ideal atheist, who might be a Lenin; and I know that such admirable exemplars of thoroughness and reason as St. Francis and Lenin are very uncommon; but it clarifies the issues if we concern ourselves with the pure types.

Now if your correspondent was, as I suspect, a Churchman (whether of my communion or not) trying to take the point of view of the "man in the street," there are two confusions: that of a man taking two points of view at once, and that inherent in the "man in the street's" point of view. I am assuming, out of good will, that your correspondent's own point of view is not a confused one. The confusion which he appears to have taken on does not prevent him from having something to say that is worth saying; but it is something which needs a good deal of clarification. We must make clear at the start that to justify the existence of the Church in the eyes of the world is from the Church's point of view no more rational than to justify any of the laws of physics, or the primary axioms and propositions of mathematics. The thoughts, words and deeds of individual ecclesiastics may from time to time require a good deal of justification, or even regret; the ecclesiastical organization and administration may be criticized; the quality and qualifications of men taking orders may be criticized; the quality and the subject-matter of sermons do actually come in for severe criticism which is often deserved. And obviously, the quality of spiritual direction given to individual penitents will vary a great deal. But so long as the Sacraments are provided for the benefit of men, and the services for the glory of God, the Church is doing what is its *essential* business.

Is there not a great [deal] more that the Church might do? There is, as a matter of fact, a great deal more that the Church does do. But one would hardly suspect, from your correspondent's way of putting the matter, that any responsibility rested with the laity.[3] I suspect that the "man in the street" interprets the parabolic figure of the Shepherd and the Flock too widely, and regards himself for *all* purposes as a Sheep; with no further obligations towards the pastors than those expected of the sheep which we

eat as mutton. He is even inclined to murmur that he has looked up and not been fed; he expects, like an ordinary sheep, to have his pasture provided for him without taking the trouble to look up.[4]

Your correspondent seems to envisage a Church weakened by an irresolute Modernism, established upon no theological Rock, and attempting to justify its existence by "a thousand and one services, which other organizations might do better."[5] It is for him to provide evidence. There are no doubt services, such as the provision of better housing, which can be done better by other organizations – such as the State. But after all, your contributor says only, "*might* be done better"; and until they *are* done better, I do not see why the Church should not lead the way; and I see no reason for assuming that the Church, in exerting itself in social activities, is necessarily neglecting its proper business.

A great deal of the criticism which the Church meets comes from such antagonistic sources that it cancels itself out. The two great popular types of criticism may be named Indifference and Meddling. If the Church affirms the primary importance of the spiritual over the temporal, it is accused of indifference to the real problems of the modern world; if it affirms that the Christian Doctrine is incompatible with this or that political doctrine, or with this or that tendency of modern society, if it affirms its attitude towards divorce, or usury, or the treatment of the unemployed, another class of critics, equally numerous, vocal and powerful, will immediately accuse it of meddling with what is not its business. Is the Church which put forth *Rerum Novarum* and *Quadragesimo Anno* "seeking eagerly" (as your contributor puts it) "for irrelevant attractions to win ears which are deaf to its doctrines"?[6]

It is difficult to reply to a writer when one does not know upon what facts he bases his generalizations. It is still more difficult when he formulates the problem very differently from oneself. There are at least three problems (1) the attitude, not of the Church towards the laity, but of the Church in the sense in which it comprehends the laity, towards the World, (2) the attitude of the layman, who has to take part in the life of the World as well as in that of the Church, (3) that of the person who is neither for us nor against us. None of them can be dealt with very briefly.

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. The article "What Does the Church Stand For?," printed under the pseudonym Laicus Ignotus [Unknown Layman] in the *Spectator* of 12 Oct 1934 (516-17), invited "writers

representative of different divisions and schools of thought in the Christian Churches of Great Britain" to give their answers to the questions put therein. TSE was the first respondent under this series title.

2. "The Churches say a good deal about the man in the street, and the man in the street, if he is not saying a great deal, is thinking a great deal about the Churches" (516).

3. "The age in which the Church might be a comprehensive institution is past. There are other societies which have staked out claims for many of the offices which once fell to the Church. It is the present age with which we are dealing, and in it the Church cannot escape from the demand that it should do its own definite work. What is that work?" (516).

4. In the parable of the Good Shepherd (John 10:1-21), Jesus is portrayed as the Good Shepherd who lays down his life for the flock of sheep. But TSE likely alludes to Milton's attack on the Church in "Lycidas": "The hungry Sheep look up, and are not fed" (125), a passage which is marked in his copy of Milton's *Paradise Regained, Samson Agonistes, & Other Poems* (London: J. M. Dent, 1903) (Houghton).

5. "[The man in the street] can understand the defiant note of the believer, the note which is heard in Mr. T. S. Eliot's 'The Rock.' He cannot understand the timid, compromising, apologetic Church, which puts its distinctive gift in the background, and busies itself in a thousand and one services, which other organizations might do better" (516).

6. "The impossible Church is the Church which is always seeking eagerly for irrelevant attractions to win the ears which are deaf to its doctrines" (516). *Rerum novarum* (Latin for "Of the New Things") is an encyclical issued by Pope Leo XIII on 15 May 1891 addressing the systemic problems suffered by the working classes. The encyclical *Quadragesimo anno* (Latin for "In the 40th Year"), issued by Pope Pius XI forty years after *Rerum novarum* on 15 May 1931, offers a critique of socialism and capitalism, insisting that the social and economic order must be founded on ethical principles that preserve human freedom while avoiding extreme individualism.

Orage: Memories

The New English Weekly, 6 (15 Nov 1934) 100[1]

I had a feeling of loss when Orage gave up the *New Age* and went to America; I had a feeling of relief when he returned and started the *New English Weekly*; I had a feeling of very deep loss when I read of his death the other day. It was not a personal loss, for my meetings with him, over a period of some eighteen years, had been infrequent and in public places. It is something quite as disturbing as a private loss: it is a public loss.[2]

Many people will remember Orage as the tireless and wholly disinterested evangelist of monetary reform; many will remember him as the best leader-writer in London – on Wednesday mornings I always read through the first part of the *New English Weekly* before attending to any other work. A smaller number will remember him, as R. H. C. of the *New Age*, as the best literary critic of that time in London.[3] Some will remember him as the benevolent editor who encouraged merit and (what is still rarer) tolerated genius. He was something more than the sum of these. He was a man who could be both perfectly right and wholly wrong; but when he was wrong one respected him all the more, as a man who was seeking the essential things and therefore was unafraid of making a fool of himself – a very rare quality indeed. What was great about him was not his intelligence, fine as that was, but his honesty and his selflessness. Most of us have not the self-knowledge to realise how parasitic we are upon the few men of fixed principle and selfless devotion, how the pattern of our world depends, not so much upon what they teach us, but just upon their being *there*. But when a man like Orage dies, we ought to admit that his no longer being *there* throws us, for the time, into disarray; so that a more thorough reorganisation is necessary than we should have believed possible.

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. The last of five tributes to A. R. Orage, who died on 6 Nov, printed under this general title.

2. Orage edited the literary magazine the *New Age* from 1907 to 1922 before moving to Paris to study at George Gurdjieff's Institute for the Harmonious Development of Man. In 1924, he was appointed to teach the Gurdjieff system in America. Returning to England in 1930, he became interested in the Social Credit Movement, and in Apr 1932, he founded the *New*

English Weekly: A Review of Public Affairs, Literature, and the Arts, which he edited until his death. TSE met Orage in 1922, writing to Ezra Pound on 19 July: "have met Orage and liked him" (*L1* 709).

3. In his preface to *Readers and Writers (1917-1921)* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1922), Orage explained: "Under the title of 'Readers and Writers' and over the initials 'R. H. C.' [Richard H. Congreve] I contributed to the *New Age*, during a period of seven or eight years, a weekly literary causerie" (5). TSE later discussed this book in his "Views and Reviews" of 7 Nov 1935 (5.281), and he expanded on his obituary memorial for Orage in his "Commentary" of Jan 1935 (5.260).

A Commentary

The Criterion: A Literary Review, 14 (Jan 1935) 260-64

The death of A. R. Orage remains the most important event and the most fitting to commemorate in this commentary.[1] For a time I thought that everything to be said had been said by the writers who contributed to the obituary number (November 15th) of *The New English Weekly*.[2] Seldom has a more remarkable tribute appeared in a less public way; a dozen or more of the writers were men who should be able to command space in *The Times* for any public letter they wanted to write[3] – but I cannot think that any of the writers could have written quite as they did, except to an audience whose sympathy and understanding were assured. But on re-reading the memorials, including my own, I have some second thoughts which I should like to put on record.

I have not a copy of *Readers and Writers*,[4] or a file of *The New Age*, to which to refer, but unless my memory is quite at fault, I think that my assertion that Orage was "the best literary critic of that time in London" requires precision.[5] One kind of literary sensibility is that of the man who appears to have been *waiting* for that which is new and good and right in art, who is in some sort prepared for it before it arrives; to whom it appears to come as the missing piece in a puzzle almost solved. This exquisite fitness for new art was not Orage's quality; indeed, I suspect that sometimes Orage recognized new literary art not by inspection, but rather by inference from his personal impression of the man who wrote it. I cannot recall, in *Readers and Writers*, any startling recognition of novelty. What I do recall is that when faced with authority or reputation and success, Orage was never distracted; and that he could penetrate quite simply and unpretentiously to the heart of the moral rottenness, or intellectual dishonesty and turpitude, of the most acclaimed authors; that he was the enemy of pretence and stupidity. And I recall a style which was as far from that of a *Times* leader as it was near to the essentials of good prose. I say that Orage was primarily a moralist; but to say that he was a moralist is not to say that he was a moralist *instead* of being a critic of literature. He was that necessary and rare person, the moralist in criticism; not the inquisitor who tries to impose (his) morals upon literature, but the critic who perceives the

morals *of* literature, and who recognizes that intellectual dishonesty, laziness and confusion are cardinal sins in literature.

Having spoken of Orage as a moralist in criticism leads me to my second point. Several of the memorial writers with whom I am more or less in sympathy, deplored (as I did myself, though less openly than some) Orage's preoccupation with certain forms of mysticism.[6] Perhaps my own attitude is suggestive of the reformed drunkard's abhorrence of intemperance; at any rate I deprecate Orage's mysticism as much as anyone does. Yet, while it was something that I think should be opposed if he were still alive, it is something that I think we should, in a fashion, accept now that he is dead. Without the streak of other-worldliness which was responsible for these aberrations, Orage would not have occupied the place that he occupied and still occupies. Had he been a Catholic, accepting a Christian mysticism with its reservations and safeguards, he could not have occupied that place either; for that denomination would have frightened away many who needed to be attracted and instructed in social doctrines as far as their prejudices would permit. Had he been a Catholic his mysticism would have repelled; as that of an irresponsible religious adventurer, his mysticism was merely smiled at. It may have attracted some of the young, and it did not gravely offend the mature. And it had its effect. For without this restless desire for the absolute, Orage would have done little more than half a dozen men who survive him could do; he would have been merely a reasonable persuader towards the reasonable revolution. As it is, people who advocate monetary reform are accused of being timid compromisers, of wishing to save their middle-class skins as economically as possible, and are taunted with their unwillingness to immolate their souls before the altar of the *âme collective*. No one could accuse Orage of the obscure mind to avoid, or the weak heart to refuse, any sacrifice that might lead to the real good.

It is hardly excessive to say that to-day, everyone who thinks, and everyone who feels, is in some way a "revolutionist." Of good revolutionists, there are two kinds, distinguished by the end from which they start. There are those who are impatient with human stupidity; these begin by wanting some kind of monetary reform; their imagination is haunted by the spectre of coffee burnt, wheat dumped into the sea, herrings ploughed into the soil, etc. And there are those who begin from the other end, who talk, in France, of *le spirituel*, or with us (I am sorry to say) of "change of heart."[7] Orage did a good deal to hold the two together. He saw that any real change for the better meant a spiritual revolution; and he saw that no spiritual

revolution was of any use unless you had a practical economic scheme. What we need to remember is Orage's mediating position, and we need to work as if he were still here to mediate.

We are really, you see, up against the very difficult problem of the *spiritual* and the *temporal*, the problem of which the problem of Church and State is a derivative. The danger, for those who start from the temporal end, is Utopianism; settle the problem of distribution – of wheat, coffee, aspirin or wireless sets – and all the problems of evil will disappear. The danger, for those who start from the spiritual end, is Indifferentism; neglect the affairs of the world and save as many souls out of the wreckage as possible. Sudden in this difficulty, and in pity at our distress, appears no one but the divine Sophia. She tells us that we have to begin from both ends at once. She tells us that if we devote ourselves too unreservedly to particular economic remedies, we may only separate into minute and negligible chirping sects; sects which will have nothing in common except the unexamined values of contemporary barbarism. And she tells us, that if we devote our attention, as do some of our French friends, to *le spirituel*, we may attain only a feeble approximation to catholicism, and a feeble approximation to Guild Socialism.

When I say "our French friends" I mean something more than a poster of the Southern Railway.[8] I mean not only that England and France are the "inevitable allies," but that their thought should complete each other. In practical suggestions for the reorganization of society we have a great deal to offer the French, who do not appear to know the work of any of the important English economists during the last thirty years. And on the more theoretic side they have a great deal to offer us.[9*] The examination of the implications of the *âme collective* in *Demain la France* is a valuable piece of work.[10] And the more France and England become isolated together as "Western," in distinction from "Central" Europe, the more attentively should they study their common problems.

One difference between the "economic" and the "spiritual" revolution is this, that while the spiritual by itself cannot hope to affect directly any but a small spiritual élite, which must be perpetually recruited anew, the economic revolution is certain to affect society very deeply, to affect the relations of man with man. Orage was, I am sure, quite aware that the kind of economic changes which he wished to see brought about, might work more radical changes in society than any of the revolutions which our time has seen. But we cannot assume that the changes resulting from an economic revolution, however excellent the economic system in principle, will *automatically* be all for the

good. You are certain of some change, but you cannot predict all the consequences. To say nothing of the possibility, to which we should all be wide awake, of revolutions being side-tracked, manipulated, exploited and degraded – even the *probability* that they will be – you cannot leave everything to even the most perfect machine. At some point human nature, unchanged in its fundamental passions and weaknesses, will be handling the controls. The difficult effort is that to expect neither too much nor too little of the changes which it is possible to operate directly upon society.

I am by no means sure that Orage kept this balance perfectly; indeed, I do not see how the particular kind of religious enthusiasm by which he was animated could have provided him with the necessary measures. Nevertheless, the religious passion which inspired him, and which is evident throughout even his notes on the Stalin-Wells conversation, cannot rightly be belittled or ignored.[11] That is what put him in a central position, and made possible that through him men of most varied sorts were brought together, in loose but certain association, who otherwise would have had no common ground of action.

We print in this number some observations on the condition of Education in America by Canon B. Iddings Bell of Rhode Island.[12] As some readers may hold the mistaken belief that education in America has no lessons or warnings for education in England, a word of comment may not be amiss. So far as I have had the opportunity to observe, the problems of education in England and in America are likely to become more, rather than less similar. The problems of the provincial universities appear very similar, and the importance of the provincial universities relative to that of the older foundations is in both countries increasing. It is therefore pertinent to know what an American educator, whose attitude is similar to that which *The Criterion* might be expected to take up, thinks of American Education to-day. Canon Bell was for some years the head of a college which he ran in a way opposed to the general tendencies of the time; a college which, I imagine, has altered its character since he left it.

T. S. E.

NOTES

1. Editor of *The New English Weekly* (*NEW*) since its inception in 1932, Orage died on 6 Nov 1934.

2. Under the general heading "Orage: Memories," TSE's memorial appeared in the *NEW*, 6 (15 Nov 1934), 100 (5.146); also grouped there were four other tributes by George W. Russell

(AE), G. K. Chesterton, G. Bernard Shaw, and C. H. Douglas. In addition to the five memorials printed at the front of the review, forty-five more were printed at the end under the heading "Obituary Letters to the Editor"; some of the authors included Ezra Pound, H. G. Wells, Richard Aldington, Herbert Read, John Middleton Murry, Edwin Muir, and Thomas Sturge Moore.

3. Orage's obituary notice and memorial (unsigned) appeared in *The Times* of 7 Nov 1934, 21.

4. *Readers and Writers (1917-1921)* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1922) is a collection of articles originally published by Orage in *The New Age* under the initials R. H. C.

5. 5.146.

6. Not all of the memorial writers described Orage's mysticism in negative terms, but among those with whom TSE found himself in sympathy, Herbert Read's tribute was the closest: "[Orage] had a streak of mysticism in his makeup which personally I deplored; it rendered him ineffectual as a man of action, and in his particular situation action was needed" *NEW*, 6 (15 Nov 1934), 112. G. K. Chesterton wrote of Orage's theosophy: "Like W. B. Yeats, . . . [Orage] originally stemmed out of the more intelligent and independent growths of a sort of theosophical thought: and though their gods were not my gods, they had saved both men from the godforsaken cheap materialism of most revolutionists in their day" (98). M. D. (Montague David) Eder asked: "Was [Orage] a mystic? Only in the sense that we are all mystics. At the bottom we know so little and the philosophies are all so futile; A. R. O. never deluded himself with knowledge when sense existed . . ." (110). John Middleton Murry wrote: "In Orage there was an obstinate substratum of belief that there was some secret of control over the universe: a key by which one could unlock all the doors, and be a master of Power . . . something, in short, of the mentality of the Grand Inquisitor in Dostoevsky's great legend. I happen to belong, by nature, to the other side" (115).

7. In his "French Chronicle" of July 1934, Montgomery Belgion defines "le spirituel" for readers of *The Criterion*: "Now the word 'spiritual' is used in French in two senses. It is used of spirit and of the mind. As *L'Ordre Nouveau* has emphasized the affective at the expense of the rational, it cannot describe mental activity as rational. Hence it calls such activity 'spiritual,' and that is legitimate enough. Its slogan, '*Spirituel d'abord, économique ensuite*,' simply means that opportunities for what it calls 'creative action' are more urgent than economic considerations. . . . *L'Ordre Nouveau*'s sense of the word 'spiritual' carries no moral connotation" (653).

8. A grouping of separate railway companies affected by the 1921 Railways Act, the Southern Railway connected London to the southern parts of the country, especially to Channel ports that gave access to French trade and tourism. The marketing strategy of the "Southern," as it was called, included vibrantly colored posters touting fast and cheap service to the coast, to vacation spots, and to ferries to the continent.

9*. TSE's note: "I am thinking of several periodicals, which have been mentioned in our *French Chronicle*, and of a number of books such as *Demain la France*, by Robert Francis, Thierry Maulnier and Jean-Pierre Maxence (Grasset)."

In his "French Chronicle" in the *Criterion* of July 1934, Montgomery Belgion records a "number of reviews which have recently been launched as organs of groups of young Frenchmen who wish to promote more or less definite political theories"; he lists six reviews: *L'Homme nouveau*; *Pamphlet*; *La Révolution constructive*; *Esprit*; *L'Ordre nouveau*; and *Nous voulons*.

Belgion singles out the groups surrounding *Esprit* and *L'Ordre nouveau* as being "outstanding" (650).

Galvanized by the Stavisky crisis and the massacre of fifteen right-wing protesters in early 1934, Francis, Maulnier and Maxence dedicated their work *Demain la France* (1934) to "the dead of Feb 6: first witnesses of the next revolution, felled by the bullets of an anti-national, anti-social and inhuman regime." The authors rejected parliamentary democracy and diagnosed the impotence of the state as resulting from the external influences of Jews, Freemasons, and financial interests.

10. Adapting the work of sociologist Émile Durkheim, who first proposed the idea of the collective consciousness, Gustave Le Bon defined the "collective soul" (*âme collective*) as an agglomeration of individual consciousnesses into a mental unity, arising in limited, transitory circumstances (*Psychologie des foules*, 1895. Paris: Félix Alcan, 1905, 17-18). In *Demain la France*, this sociological description of a transitory state does service as a more enduring political category. The chapter "Les Idéaux collectivistes" (320-57) pursues a vigorous critique of collectivist ideals and free thought ("libre pensée"): "All socialist, radical, and parliamentary proclamations, in a word, that are posted these days on the walls of France do not bother to distinguish truth from error with regard to reality. They distinguish truth from error with regard to the majority. One does not say: the people need . . . the people must . . . rather, one says: the People want or do not want. Why? Because the people in question on these posters are no longer a group of men living on the same earth, but a group of 'consciousnesses' having already suffered a prior reduction in free thought. All democracy, liberal or Marxist, presupposes a metaphysics of the soul" (Paris: Grasset, 1934, 332-33).

11. On his 1934 trip to Moscow to meet with Soviet writers, H. G. Wells was granted an interview with Stalin. The subsequent conversation was printed in *The New Statesman* (27 Oct 1934) as a special supplement. Orage's response to this event was published posthumously in the *NEW* of 29 Nov as "A. R. Orage's Notes on the Stalin-Wells Conversation" (145-48).

12. "The Decay of Intelligence in America," in the *Criterion* of Jan 1935 (193-203). Bernard Iddings Bell, a widely known lecturer and author, was an Episcopal priest and warden of St. Stephen's College from 1919 to 1933. He insisted on the theological basis of education, to which TSE refers in "The Problem of Education" (5.127).

On 26 Sept 1934, TSE wrote to F. R. Leavis: "I may be publishing in *The Criterion* an article on American education by Canon Iddings Bell, who is almost the only clergyman in America, Roman Catholics excepted, whose mind didn't seem to me to be completely stuffed with wool. I wonder if you have heard anything about his educational experiment at St. Stephen's College New York, which was finally stamped out by Nicholas Murray Butler." Founded in 1860 as an independent and theologically minded institution, by 1928 St. Stephen's College had been absorbed by Columbia University as an undergraduate school. (It changed its name to Bard College in 1934 and broke its affiliation with Columbia in 1944.) By 1933, the college was in dire financial straits, which contributed to Bell's resignation.

Notes on the Way [I]

Time and Tide, 16 (5 Jan 1935) 6-[7][1]

Today (December 29th) is the Feast of St. Thomas of Canterbury, better known to most people as Thomas Becket; and I seize the opportunity to mention that fact, because it is hardly likely that anybody else will.[2] I have discovered his Mass in a curious volume called *The English Missal* (curious because it includes Joseph of Calasanz and the Blessing of Eggs, but has nothing to say about Charles, King and Martyr). The Introit is *Gaudeamus*, "Rejoice we all in the Lord"; but I suspect that St. Thomas himself might have preferred to be remembered with the Introit for Boxing Day: *Sederunt principes*, "Princes, moreover, did sit and did witness falsely against me."[3]

St. Thomas, although he came to a sticky end, had to deal with a situation very much simpler than that of today. The Church concerns itself with matters about which he never bothered, and is interfered with in ways probably exceeding his worst fears. Nobody agrees where its domain begins or ends: it is reproved both for meddling and for remaining aloof. But the church offers today the last asylum for one type of mind which the Middle Ages would hardly have expected to find among the faithful: that of the sceptic.[4*]

Obviously, I mean by the sceptic, the man who suspects the origins of his own beliefs, as well as those of others; who is most suspicious of those which are most passionately held; who is still more relentless towards his own beliefs than towards those of others; who suspects other people's motives because he has learned the deceitfulness of his own. According to this outline of the sceptic, Voltaire was a very imperfect sceptic: for, although he questioned the Christian Faith, which in itself, and at that time, was perhaps a worthy thing to do, he did not sufficiently question his own motives for questioning the Christian Faith. According to this outline also, Anatole France was a mere journalist of scepticism, exploiting, with excellent sales results, a taste for scepticism, without having ever submitted himself to its merciless rigours. And Mr. Aldous Huxley, who passes for a sceptic amongst the general public, and whose intelligence and learning I greatly admire, is interested in spiritualism and ghosts. The real sceptic knows that even if one return from the dead, that will not settle the doubts of those who are not convinced by Moses and the prophets.[5]

Nevertheless, I respect Mr. Huxley for not having taken the ticket which has almost become necessary for men of letters. There is a red ticket and a blue ticket. You may be a Communist or you may be a Credit Reformer. I admit gladly that to be either of these is better than to be nothing: the merit depends on the amount of thinking you have done. There is no objection to your employing your abilities, in poetry or imaginative prose, in the service of a cause, though you do it at your risk, for one danger is that the cause may not be big enough, or profound and permanent enough, not to become somewhat ridiculous under such treatment; and another danger is that you will not succeed in transmuting it into a personal and peculiar passion. The making of great poetry requires a just and delicate sense of values; distorted or incomplete values may easily turn the sublime into the ridiculous. It is better to suspend decision than to surrender oneself to a belief merely for the sake of believing something. There is a kind of scepticism which is merely caused by the refusal to think things out; and there is a kind of belief springing from the same cause: both are illustrations of the sin of mental sloth. And I question whether any of the social causes agitated in our time is complete enough to provide much food for poetry: the spiritual values are sometimes explicitly denied, and are implicit in a muddled state.

One instance of theological muddleheadedness and the refusal to think things out was provided not very long ago on the occasion of the admission of Russia into the League of Nations.[6] The question raised was whether it was or was not compatible with the Christian principles of the League of Nations to admit Russia; the unexamined assumption was the Christian foundation of the League of Nations. It should have been obvious that the League of Nations never had had any closer relation to the Christian Faith than any other piece of temporal machinery of government; that it was to be judged by Christians like any other such machine, according to its works; and that to reveal its true nature by such an act as the admission of Russia ought to be all to the good. The League of Nations had handled successfully minor questions in which the interests of the greater powers were in accord; it can probably help to keep the minor nations at peace so long as it is to the interest of the great powers that they should be at peace. Its fiction that countries differ only in size and not in the quality of their civilizations (above a certain level) may be useful, though it has its inconveniences. It does not pretend that nominally "Christian" nations (that is, nations with cultures in the Christian tradition) are in any way superior to

non-Christian nations or peoples. We support it simply because we hope that it may, most of the time, prove itself to be an obstacle to war. But it is not an obstacle to war because it fortifies Christian sentiment, nor, on the other hand, does it attempt to investigate and cure the economic causes of war; it is simply a machine; it has a Christian mission only in the imagination of Viscount Cecil.[7] I believe we need, on the one hand, a rigorous study and practice of Christian ethics, and, on the other, such economic changes as will tend to make it impossible for any nation to have anything to *gain* by war. Economic reform accompanied only by confused Christian sentiment and benevolence is not likely to do any better than the spread of Christian faith and practice indifferent to the temporal order. The problem of war is a mixed problem; it belongs to the same type as that of Church and State; ultimately, the relation of the temporal and the spiritual. And the examination of such problems requires the exercise of all the powers of scepticism that we can muster.

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. On 13 Apr 1934, an assistant editor of *Time and Tide* invited TSE on behalf of editor Lady Rhondda to become a contributor to its regular feature "Notes on the Way," a "series of notes about the world at large, in which each writer is given an absolutely free hand to comment upon contemporary events . . . on anything indeed which appears to him as interesting and important. Among those who have already taken part are Seán O'Casey, Aldous Huxley, Ellen Wilkinson, H. M. Tomlinson, Rose Macaulay, Professor Laski, and Rebecca West. Lady Rhondda would very much like to have you as a contributor in this series, and wonders whether you would consider writing them for the month of January next." This is the first of four contributions by TSE printed weekly through 25 Jan.

2. Thomas Becket (ca. 1118-1170), the martyred Archbishop of Canterbury, was soon to become the subject of TSE's play *Murder in the Cathedral*, on which he was working at this time.

3. St. Thomas's Mass, featuring the Introit *Gaudeamus*, is to be found on his Feast Day (29 Dec) in *The English Missal for the Laity* (London: W. Knott, 1933), 43-47. *Sederunt principes* is the Introit for the Feast of St. Stephen (26 Dec), where it reads: "Princes did sit, and speak against me, and the wicked persecuted me" (34). The feast of Joseph Calasanctius (1557-1648), also known as Joseph Calasanz, founder of the Pious Schools and the Order of the Piarists, is celebrated on 27 Aug (741-42). "The Blessing of Eggs" features under the section "Various Benedictions" ([156]). TSE's copy is signed on the front free endpage.

King Charles I (1600-49) is the only person to be canonized by the Anglican Church. In the calendar of the Church of England, he is identified as "Charles, King and Martyr, 1649."

4*. TSE's note: "I wish to recommend at this point Dr. Paul Elmer More's new book, *The Sceptical Approach to Religion* [1934], though without incriminating the author in any of my own views."

TSE wrote to More on 9 Jan 1935: "I have just started *The Sceptical Approach to Religion* with keen interest and enjoyment, but have to lay it aside until at least the end of this month. I shall write to you again when I have read it."

5. Luke 16:31: "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead" (KJV).

6. Russia joined the League of Nations on 18 Sept 1934.

7. The British lawyer and diplomat Edgar Algernon Robert Gascoyne-Cecil, 1st Viscount Cecil of Chelwood (1864-1958), was one of the architects and champions of the League of Nations from its inception in 1919 to its demise in 1946.

Dowson's Poems

To the Editor of *The Times Literary Supplement*

The Times Literary Supplement, 1719 (10 Jan 1935) 21

Sir, – In the interesting review of Ernest Dowson's Poems in your last issue, your reviewer suggests that I caught the phrase "Falls the shadow" from Dowson's "Cynara."[1] This derivation had not occurred to my mind, but I believe it to be correct, because the lines he quotes have always run in my head, and because I regard Dowson as a poet whose technical innovations have been underestimated. But I do not think that I got the title "The Hollow Men" from Dowson. There is a romance of William Morris called "The Hollow Land." There is also a poem of Mr. Kipling called "The Broken Men." I combined the two.[2]

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

T. S. ELIOT

24, RUSSELL SQUARE, LONDON, W.C.1.

NOTES

1. In his anonymous review of *The Poetical Works of Ernest Christopher Dowson* (1934), edited by Desmond Flower, Geoffrey Tillotson wrote in the issue of 3 Jan: "It seems less than fantastic to note . . . that the repeated 'Falls the shadow' of the 'Hollow Men' seems derivative partly of this poem ['Non sum qualis eram bonae sub regno Cynarae']: – / Last night, ah, yesternight, betwixt her lips and mine / There fell thy shadow, Cynara! thy breath was shed" (6).

2. Tillotson goes on to say: "And a favourite phrase of Dowson's is 'the hollow land.' It comes three times, and twice with the symbolic deepening of initial capital letters" (6). William Morris's prose romance *The Hollow Land* was published in 1856, and Kipling's poem "The Broken Men" (1902) was later included by TSE in his anthology *A Choice of Kipling's Verse* (1941).

Notes on the Way [II]

Time and Tide, 16 (12 Jan 1935) 33-34

There is no subject of the first importance to everyone today on which there is more confusion than that of Peace and War. That we all dislike war and wish to avert it only increases the confusion: for we not only have very different notions of how it is to be averted, but very different notions of why it is a bad thing. Most people, I fear, do not think it necessary to devote much attention to the problem of why they believe War to be a bad thing – it is their first assumption. This failure to examine assumptions, to "dissociate ideas," may lead them to conclusions which fail to persuade.

I find that while I begin the perusal of any treatise against War in entire sympathy with the author, I am apt to put it down in a state of vexation. Take, for instance, Mr. A. A. Milne's recent essay, *Peace with Honour*. On the first page he summarizes the events which precipitated the Great War: the murder at Serajevo, the need that "the honour of Austria" should be satisfied, and the refusal of Serbia to satisfy it.[1] This hardly differs from the ordinary newspaper story of the time, except by Mr. Milne's insinuations. He suggests that the "honour" of a country is a simple idea, that it is a wrong idea, and that it can be a sufficient cause of war. He implies further that a country's "honour" is humbug, because it was because "Austria was a bigger country than Serbia" that her honour required satisfaction.[2]

I think that Mr. Milne, in his zeal, and by his simplification, rejects possible friends at the start. "A country should have a sense of honour" is one of those assertions like "War is evil" which command such immediate assent from most people, that their meaning requires very careful examination. If you deride the "sense of honour" among nations, you cannot very well uphold it among individuals, unless you believe that a nation is something with a "collective soul," which is something different from the collection of the souls which compose it.[3] I admit readily that among individuals, as among nations, the "sense of honour" has led men to commit all sorts of folly, and that it has been, and is, very often, merely a name for vanity and pride – leading men to perform sometimes right actions and sometimes wrong actions, and both for the wrong reasons. A sense of honour is the name for a residue of acquired and transmitted feelings and habits; and if

you are to deprive popular morality of this name, then you must replace it with some other more fundamental morality than Mr. Milne bothers to provide.[4*]

But Mr. Milne, like many reformers whose attention is narrowly focused, is so devoured by the thought that War is Bad that he cannot see that a great many other things are bad too. He maintains the old rational view that wars are caused directly by men's passions and stupidity, by their failing to understand what is to their own interest, or by their failing to feel passionately enough against war. I am not favourably impressed by his emotive utterance that if only the Pope were Milne, it is at least possible that there would be no more war in Europe. It is possible that if Milne were the Pope, he might be more aware of the difficulties.[5] Mr. Milne's assumption that he feels more passionately about war than does either the Pope or the Archbishop of Canterbury may be true, because it cannot be disproved; but, like some other of his assumptions, it may not appear self-evident to others than himself.[6] For instance, he says, in passing, "It is true that we should all like to abolish the tip, the gratuity, the *pourboire*" [35]. I question this assertion. It is true that when we see the gratuity abused – that is to say, when we see people with more money to spend getting more attention than we get, we grumble, and perhaps blame a now almost mythical American Tourist. It is true also that in giving tips we may merely be flattering our vanity by winning a little cheap gratitude, or the appearance of it. But, on the other hand, there is something about a tip which establishes a personal relation between you and the waiter or the cabdriver. I like giving tips. I can quite see that a social system which involves tipping may be a bad system. There may well be a better relation between human beings than that. But Mr. Milne says nothing about changing society; he merely asserts that (in the present state of society) tipping is a bad thing; whereas *in the present state of society* it seems to me a good thing.[7]

On page 37 of his book Mr. Milne makes four statements about War, none of which I can accept.[8] I question the existence of the "national ambition" which war aims to satisfy. I mean that in every country the great mass of the population is totally uninterested in national ambition. We may be worked up into a frenzy at moments, but most of the time we only ask to be allowed to pursue our private ambitions – primarily our ambition to make a living and enjoy some security. Wars seem to me to have much more to do with the private ambitions and covetousness of a small number of people – or to arise out of these private ambitions, whether they aim directly to

satisfy these ambitions or not. Mr. Milne does not enter into the question of the nature of the public limited company.

I am not reviewing Mr. Milne's book, but only taking it as an instance of what seems to me a frequent type of confused and insufficient thinking about war. And it is appropriate that I should consider Mr. Milne rather than any of the more professional writers about War, such as Sir Norman Angell, because I take him to be a simple man of letters like myself, with a sense of public responsibility.[9] I share his feelings about militaristic utterances by foreign statesmen. At the same time, I question the importance of these utterances as elements in the precipitation of war. I think that in this country we need to exercise imagination in favour of foreign countries. Britain is no doubt the most peace-loving country in Europe. But that is not only because we are more civilized and more benevolent than other peoples: it is partly because Britain has never been humiliated, because it is so untainted by feelings of inferiority that Britons are not even aware how superior they feel themselves to be to people of other races, and because apparently Britain has more to gain by peace than by war. What people feel who can remember their country invaded, or subjected to a successful blockade, requires some power of imagination to realize. We ought to feel more admiration for any man in France or Germany who has pacifist sentiments than we should feel for ourselves. And we must take warning from the exasperation of the American public, from time to time, with European nations (including Britain) for finding money for armaments, but not for "paying their debts." Perhaps even John Hampden would have thought ship-money more reasonable had his property lain on the coast of Kent.[10]

I do not see how you can condemn War in the abstract unless you assert (*a*) that there is no higher value than Peace; (*b*) that there is *nothing* worth fighting for; and (*c*) that a war in which one side is right and the other wrong is inconceivable. I am prepared to admit that any number of particular wars have been unjustifiable by either side but not to admit the foregoing assumptions. I am not prepared to admit that the nominal motives (which were probably in part the actual motives) of a great many participants in the Crusades were wrong. I do not see how at the time anything could have checked me from a whole-hearted support of the Crusades, except such knowledge of the human heart as would lead one to anticipate what did happen; for actually, of course, the Crusades turned out a thoroughgoing disgrace to Christian Europe. And I think that general tirades against War are apt to blind us to the true causes of the particular kinds of

war which we may experience in contemporary society. The disturbing thing about the kind of wars we fear in the modern world is that they are *not* wars of aggression: it is our peace that is aggressive. If the causes of war lay in the simple bellicosity of even a small number of people, the remedies might be easier to apply. What makes modern wars perplexing is that you cannot, except in the frenzy of journalism, talk about virtuous nations and wicked nations, virtuous and wicked rulers, however persistently we try to find scapegoats.

Even if we confine ourselves to consideration of the particular war that we shall have, if we had one, there are still red herrings to distract us. A good deal of sentiment has been worked up against war by descriptions of the horrors of modern "unlimited" warfare – aggravated by the assumption that our enemies, whoever they prove to be, will not have the nice scruples about diplomatic etiquette, announcement of hostilities, and so on that we shall have. There is an assumption that while it may be fair to try to kill the enemy who is in arms against you, it is horrible to kill women, children, and other non-combatants. But there have been plenty of wars in the past which have been "unlimited" within the territory and according to the means that the state of scientific progress made possible; and a "limited" war is only one in which your fighting-men are killed abroad, while your population at home remains unmolested and patriotic. The fiction of the difference between combatants and non-combatants may have had some justification when wars were fought more or less by warriors hand to hand; but not when we can think of the female munition worker at home as more formidable than an infantryman sitting in a trench and perhaps, in the whole course of a war, never putting a bullet into a single enemy.

I think, furthermore, that writers like Mr. Milne suffer from two prejudices. One is that the great thing is to go on living. "If," he says, "the intelligent man of war wishes to know why death is taken so seriously by so many people, I will tell him." After this portentous preparation, Mr. Milne stops for an impressive moment (indicated by a new paragraph) and continues: "The reason is this: Death is final . . . Death is the worst thing that can happen, because it is the last thing that can happen" [93]. Well, I felicitate Mr. Milne; he is haunted neither by the thought of Achilles among the shades, nor by the terrors of death that beset the Christian. "Death is final." If I thought that death was final, it would seem to me a far less serious matter than it does.[11]* I should still, no doubt, be afraid of dying (though tired of living, as Mr. Paul Robeson sang), but I should not be afraid of death.[12]

And life would seem to me much less important than it does. I only mention this point to suggest that pacifism like that of Mr. Milne is not a very *Christian* pacifism.

The second prejudice is that Peace is a valuable state in itself: not simply because Peace gives the *possibility* of the amelioration of the material and spiritual state of man, but because Peace is beautiful. For a great many members of the middle-class, if they have an independent income, or talents which assure them an adequate income for their "scale of living" in pleasant or not positively uncongenial occupation, Peace in itself is a beautiful thing. But let Mr. Milne produce a modern version of Aristophanes' *Eirene*, with a chorus from Durham or the Rhondda Valley to hymn the felicities of Peace.[13] I am *not* championing War against Peace: I am merely suggesting that we ought to turn our minds to the distinction between a well-organized and a badly organized society. And I suggest that "Peace propaganda" [99], however sincere and public spirited, which treats War and Peace in an emotional way without calling attention to the economic situations which provoke War, is only likely to distract our attention from the matters that are most urgent.

On the other hand, I cannot be satisfied with the arguments of those who maintain that by reorganization of the social, or economic or financial system, war may be rendered permanently obsolete. I only agree with them that by attending to these matters we may render the modern causes of war obsolete. At present, human evil – not the sensational monstrosity that we like to attribute to a few, but the evil in which we all participate – works most efficiently through the acquisitiveness which our system sanctions. But we cannot foresee that social reorganization is enough to prevent future wars. Against the social reformers, this time, not against Mr. Milne, who has not got as far as they have, there is the Christian view, which demands more, and expects less of human nature, than any other. The difference here is between those who believe in original sin and those who do not. War is in itself a bad thing, we all agree. But what, as things are, is Peace? Or as things may be?

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. The English author A. A. (Alan Alexander) Milne (1882-1956) wrote at the beginning of *Peace with Honour: An Enquiry into the War Convention* (London: Methuen, 1934): "Servia agreed to make certain of the obeisances and motions of humility suggested to her, but rejected

certain others. Complete satisfaction being necessary to the honour of Austria, no course was left to her but the forcing of these other obeisances upon the smaller country" (1).

2. "Austria's honour, since she was a bigger country than Servia, demanded that she should seek what is called satisfaction" (1).

3. TSE briefly addresses the issue of the "collective soul" in his "Commentary" of Jan 1935 (5.150).

4*. TSE's note: "It must be acknowledged that Mr. Milne uses 'national honour' differently in different contexts. On page 14 he says: 'A nation has no honour.' On page 204 he speaks of 'English men and women who think that the supreme virtues are moral virtues, and who are more greatly concerned with the honour of their country than with its possessions'" [204-05].

5. "If only the Pope were Milne, and the Archbishop of Canterbury were Milne, then it is at least possible that there would be no more war in Europe" (5).

6. "The Pope and the Archbishop of Canterbury think that modern war is horrible; I think that war is wrong" (8).

7. "Many of us hate the convention of 'tipping,' yet we struggle against it in vain. But if tipping were made illegal and punishable, then in a generation or two the thought of tipping would seem as ridiculous as duelling now seems, and the law against it would never need to be invoked" (35).

8. "To sum it up:

1. War is the conventional use of force to satisfy some national ambition regardless of consequences.
2. Wars are usually declared in pursuit of some material end, but no attempt is made to balance the gains of war against the losses, nor to bring into account the possibility that the end, in fact, will not be attained.
3. The motive which inspires materially minded nations to act in this reckless and uneconomic way is variously described as 'honour,' 'patriotism,' or 'the necessity of maintaining the national prestige,' and is analogous to the 'honour' of the duellist.
4. This honour over-rides every restraining motive of prudence or humanity."

9. Sir Ralph Norman Angell, an executive for the World Committee against War and Fascism and a member of the executive committee of the League of Nations Union, was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1933. In his *Criterion* "Commentary" of Jan 1932, TSE discussed Angell's and Harold Wright's *Can Governments Cure Unemployment?* (1931) (4.403) and wrote to A. L. Rowse on 18 Sept 1934: "The Angellism view that war is silly is pleasant for superior minds, but only induces a superior laziness" (*L7* 320).

10. The English politician John Hampden (ca. 1595-1643), a wealthy landowner from Buckinghamshire, refused to pay ship money, a tax that Charles I tried to levy in 1634 without the consent of Parliament. It was applied only to coastal towns during wartime as a means to offset the cost of defending that part of the coast.

11*. TSE's note: "Ruskin, in a memorable passage, thought of the 'astonished state of consciousness' which rose through the smoky air when a soldier and his life were separated. Yet Ruskin, for the matter of that, was not a very orthodox Christian." TSE recalls a passage from Ruskin's introduction to *The Crown of Wild Olive: Four Lectures on Industry and War* (London: George Allen, 1882): "It made all the difference, in asserting any principle of war, whether one assumed that a discharge of artillery would merely knead down a certain quantity of once living

clay into a level line, as in a brick-field; or whether, out of every separately Christian-named portion of the ruinous heap, there went out, into the smoke and dead-fallen air of battle, some astonished condition of soul, unwillingly released" (11-12).

12. "I'm tired of livin', and afraid of dyin'" is a line from the song "Ol' Man River" performed by the singer and actor Paul Leroy Robeson (1898-1976) in the musical *Show Boat* (1927). TSE wrote to Theodora Eliot Smith on 4 Jan 1937: "the last time I visited St. Louis, in January 1933 (just about four years ago) it was more repulsive than ever. Nevertheless . . . I have a sentimental feeling which is excited to exaltation by *Show Boat* and *Old Man River* and all that sort of thing."

13. In Aristophanes' comedy *Peace* (Greek: *Εἰρήνη / Eirēnē*) (421 BC), which celebrates a return to an idyllic life in the countryside, Trygaeus achieves a peaceful conclusion to the Peloponnesian War.

Notes on the Way [III]

Time and Tide, 16 (19 Jan 1935) 88-90

There seems to be, at the present time, a good deal of chat going on about Liberty, and no wonder. We have not only the shadow of the Totalitarian State abroad, but smaller creeping shadows at home. There was the Lord Chief Justice thundering about encroachments upon the liberty of the judiciary; and at every other street corner we are reminded that we are no longer at liberty to get ourselves run over.[1]

It occurs to me that the subject of Liberty may be treated in the same way as the subject of Peace and War. We all love Peace, and we all love Liberty. Of course there are many who say that to be prepared for War is the best way to preserve the Peace; some even may hold that the only way to obtain a real peace is to wage a successful War; but this belief seems less tenable. Similarly there are strong men among us now who maintain that the only road to real Liberty is through Dictatorship. The Communists tell us that the Dictatorship is temporary, but refuse to provide an exact timetable; it should last until we are all of the same mind as the Dictator. The Fascists, on the other hand, seem to maintain that the Dictatorship will be permanent, but that the Dictator is willing what we ought to will; and that surrender of imaginary liberties is the only way of gaining real ones. Just as men of every opinion agree that Peace is the goal, and that their way is the only way to get it; so there is a complete unanimity of opinion that Liberty is the ultimate goal, and that their way is the only way to get it. It is true that both Peace and Liberty are sometimes decried, but usually for local political reasons; to cheer up the vanity of the people, or of those who count upon being among the ruling caste in a *régime* of diminished liberty. But, on the whole, Peace and Liberty are still admitted to be good things.

Here again, as I am prepared to condemn War in the abstract, though willing to condemn almost any particular war, and certainly prepared to condemn what are likely to be the *causes* of any war we may see in the near future; so I think I am likely to be on the side of liberty in particular instances, while unable to attach any meaning to liberty in the abstract. I dare say that Mr. G. D. H. Cole, Mr. Ervine, and myself, would all be

equally indignant over particular infractions of liberty. I dare say we all feel the same about Sedition Bills, and that sort of thing.[2] But when I read their correspondence, I wonder whether the abstract Liberty they both love so much more than they love each other, is anything but a phantom.[3]

For instance, Mr. Cole agrees with Mr. Ervine in the latter's assertion that "The only society that is fit for mankind is one in which every individual has the utmost freedom of thought and action and speech that is compatible with the freedom of thought and action and speech of his neighbour."[4] I can't exactly disagree with such an assertion; I wonder whether practically it means very much. How much freedom of thought and action and speech *is* compatible with the same freedom on the part of others? In practice, does not an extension of freedom on the part of some mean a diminution of that of others? And whose freedom is the more valuable? And what Mr. Ervine seems to me to be glorifying, in these words, is something which is essentially a *compromise*; and a compromise is hardly an ideal. And what is it, exactly, to be free? The statement itself sounds at first acceptable to everyone. Yet one can conceive a "society in which every individual has the utmost freedom of thought and action and speech that is compatible with the freedom of thought and action and speech of his neighbour" which should be, at the same time, a thoroughly intolerable society to live in. Freedom is not enough.

I think that any conception of liberty which is merely political is vitiated from the start. We have already, in fact, enlarged our conception of liberty from that of the politically minded nineteenth century. We have discovered that even if one man's vote is as important as that of another, there is a good deal more to freedom than political freedom; we have recognized that economic slavery is as important as political serfdom. We recognize that the man who is in terror of losing his job because he knows he will not get another, is not a free man. In some respects, certainly, the only free man is the man with an independent income; he is relatively free to defy public opinion. There is not lacking a small but convinced body of opinion that affirms that nowadays political freedom is a shadow, and financial slavery a very solid substance; that Ireland, India, and the Dominions gain a political independence which is a shadow gratifying to local vanity, and accept a real subjection to the Bank of England.[5]

But even if we have political and financial freedom we have gone but a little way. We may achieve something which is good so far as it goes. But we

have not justified liberty as an absolute good. There are other things that the ordinary man wants besides liberty; he wants security, work, leisure, satisfactions of society, friendship and sex, and health. Liberty has no absolute claim as against these other goods; and if a politician comes, assuring people that he will give them one or more or all of these goods in exchange for their liberty, they may easily be persuaded to accept. And liberty means one thing in one place and time and another thing in another. Perhaps no two races or nations, to enjoy a satisfactory amount of liberty, need quite the same liberties; some may need to be free in some ways and some in others. The British peoples, because they are naturally orderly, disciplined and tenacious of rights and privileges, can do with a greater degree of liberty in some directions than can some other peoples; in a rather different way, so can the French, with their strong traditional sense and local attachments and tough self-interest.

Next, we cannot justify liberty simply in the political field, because the word means so very much more than that. Assuming that the individual has political and economic freedom, is that enough to guarantee his liberty? Liberty for the individual means, and must mean, a great deal more than that. There is still intellectual and moral freedom. This is freedom from the influence of environment, of heredity, of public opinion, of mass-made thought. Very few people want to be free from these things; fewer still have the stubborn will to free themselves from them. It requires the maintenance of an attitude towards ourselves that is extremely painful. How easy it is to see the servitude of others, their obedience to prejudice, to the group among which they live, to the collective will of their progenitors – and how difficult to recognize and face our own! How often we see other people compounding the sins they are inclined to (I do not pretend to quote Butler exactly, and it is not important to get the quotation exact) by damning those they have no mind to![6] *La vie est un dépouillement* – I have quoted this phrase of Gourmont before now, and I think Ezra Pound quoted it before I did; and the phrase has a long history behind it; to be free we must be stripped, like the sea-god Glaucus, of any number of incrustations of education and frequentation; we must divest ourselves even of our ancestors.[7] But to undertake this stripping of acquired ideas, we must make one assumption: that of the individuality of each human being; we must, in fact, believe in the soul.

A little earlier I was on the point of referring you to Spinoza on the subject of freedom: the view that to understand, to accept, to identify oneself with what happened was freedom. But, on second thoughts, this is a pagan perversion of a Christian truth; and it is a perversion which has been still further perverted in our time. It seems to me that young and inexperienced Marxians have found a new thrill in a doctrine which is very ancient, in feeling that by surrendering themselves to what was going to happen anyway, they might acquire a will more whole and a purpose more serene.[8] In the modern form in which they accept it, I fear that (to use an equally modern term) they may merely be experiencing the delight of masochism – an accusation against which I would defend the original Stoics, and even the Elizabethan Stoics.[9] Some of our contemporaries who are willing to surrender their individual liberty to Marxism seem to me much more suspect of "psychological" (i.e., egotistical) motives than their Stoical or neo-Stoical predecessors.

What I am coming to is this. That our views about "liberty" in any particular crisis are determined by our racial and national traditions, not by a theory of liberty; so that people like Mr. Cole, Mr. Ervine, myself, and a few members of every political party, might be found in complete agreement. But in their correspondence, Mr. Cole and Mr. Ervine talk as if liberty were an absolute value. I think that many of us are, in any practical emergency, in accord. But I do not think that practical emergencies are all that matters.

If one is going to theorize about liberty, then one must go on from political and economic liberty to moral liberty. And one cannot stop short of theology. What, in short, is the ultimate nature and reason for liberty?

To me, the notion of *liberty* is meaningless without the further notion of *liberation*. One lives, not to be free, but to be freed. And to be *freed from* is meaningless unless one has some notion of what one is to be *freed for*.

According to the Christian view, I believe, the importance of liberty is due to the importance of every individual human soul. If human souls are not ultimately important, or if they are not equally important, then liberty does not matter. There is a paradox, on the highest authority, about gaining one's soul and losing it. There is also a paradox of liberty, repeated by Spinoza, repeated by Marxists, and stated by a man very much greater than either Spinoza or Marx; who says: *To follow Christ is to deny self; this is not that other course which is nothing but to seek oneself in God, which is the very*

opposite of love. For to seek self in God is to seek for comfort and refreshment from God. But to seek God in Himself is not only to be willingly deprived of this thing and of that for God, but to incline ourselves to will and choose for Christ's sake whatever is most disagreeable, whether proceeding from God or from the world; this is to love God. – (St. John of the Cross: The Ascent of Mount Carmel.)[10]

I do not think that the political idea of *liberty* can subsist quite apart from the religious idea of *liberation*. Mere political liberty cannot be permanently interesting; unless we have some notion of the purpose and destination of the individual, which makes it necessary that he should be free to fulfil this purpose and destination. If you concern yourself with this world alone, then you have only the choice between two opinions: (1) you may think you know what is best for people, and you will envisage them only as "free" when they come round to your view of what is best for them. (2) You may hold the view that no one can know what is best for people, or that "best" means only what each thinks best for himself, and therefore everyone should be free to do as he pleases so long as he interferes with no one else. In the former choice, you are imposing your own opinion; in the latter you are admitting that there is no purpose for existence.

The ultimate meaning of liberty is that each individual should be free to determine his own eternal salvation or damnation. There is no other final meaning, there is no other final value, to liberty than this. *La sua voleuntade e nostra pace* is the last word about free will.[11] And the problem of political liberty comes eventually to the general problem of free will. From our earthly point of view, of course, we know little enough about what the states of salvation and damnation are. The amount of real "freedom" in most people's lives is apparently very small – which does not abrogate our obligation to become as free as we can. Our obligation certainly, is to *love* – to love *without desire* (for the latter is to seek oneself in the beloved object, see St. John of the Cross quoted above) – or I might say to love beyond desire – for such love is not effected by the mere quenching of desire.[12] *The soul, by resigning itself to the divine light, that is, by removing from itself every spot and stain of the creature, which is to keep the will perfectly united to the will of God – for to love Him is to labour to detach ourselves from, and to divest ourselves of, everything which is not God, for God's sake – becomes immediately enlightened by, and transformed in, God.*[13]

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. The Lord Chief Justice of England, Gordon Hewart (1870-1943), who opposed bureaucratic restrictions on the judiciary, criticized the encroachment of the executive on the judiciary when the government showed reluctance to exonerate judges from salary cuts that had been imposed on civil servants in July 1933.

To reduce the increasing number of deaths on British roads, in June 1934 the Minister of Transport began a trial with marked pedestrian crossings to make them more visible to motorists. By November, 6,000 Belisha beacons, consisting of a black-and-white post surmounted by an amber globe, had been erected in London, as described in the *Times* of 10 Nov 1934, 9.

2. The Incitement to Disaffection Bill, known as the Sedition Bill, was introduced into the House of Commons in Apr 1934. The bill made the mere possession of a seditious document an offense. It was meant to prevent the dissemination among soldiers and sailors of seditious pamphlets, though its provisions were so wide that it was viewed as a serious threat to liberty and freedom of speech. The bill became law, but it was seldom used after 1934.

3. The Irish writer St. John Ervine (1883-1971) contributed "Notes on the Way" during Nov 1934. His criticism of the system of society that would curtail men's liberties advocated by the English political theorist and economist G. D. H. (George Douglas Howard) Cole (1889-1959) sparked a debate between the two in the correspondence columns of *Time and Tide* from Nov 1934 to Jan 1935.

4. In response to this statement by Ervine in his letter of 22 Dec 1934 (1689), Cole wrote on 5 Jan 1935: "I subscribe to every word of that" (10).

5. Dominions were self-governing nations that were nominally under British sovereignty. The Irish Free State had been a British Dominion since 1922. When Éamon de Valera became head of government in 1932, he introduced measures to eliminate British influence. Indians had also been demanding a greater role in the government of their country. A white paper that formed the basis of the Government of India Act 1935 was then being considered by Parliament.

6. "Compound for sins they are inclined to, / By damning those they have no mind to" (Samuel Butler, *Hudibras*, Canto I, ll. 215-16).

7. *Trans*: "Life is a process of stripping." Gourmont continues: "Le but de l'activité propre d'un homme est de nettoyer sa personnalité, de la laver de toutes le souillures qu'y déposa l'éducation, de la dégager de toutes les empreintes qu'y laissèrent nos admirations adolescentes." From chapter 7 of *Le Problème du style* (Paris: Mercure de France, 1902), 104. *Trans*: "The end of man's own activity is to clean his personality, to wash from it all the stains left on it by education, to free it from all the imprints imposed on it by adolescent admirations." Trans. Richard Aldington, *Remy de Gourmont: Selections from All his Works*, vol 2 (Chicago: P. Covici, 1928), 427-28. TSE quoted this passage in "Philip Massinger" (1920) (2.254). Pound quoted it in its entirety in "De Gourmont: A Distinction" in a special issue of *The Little Review* (Feb-Mar 1919) devoted to the French critic.

In Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Glaucus was a mortal fisherman who, upon eating a magical herb, was transmuted into a sea-god (XIII.898-968).

8. TSE likely refers to an article by John Middleton Murry entitled "The Free Man according to Marxian Philosophy" printed in the July 1934 issue of *The Adelphi*. He referred to another piece in this number in "In Sincerity and Earnestness: New Britain As I See It" (5.110). Murry writes: "The great maxim of Marxian philosophy concerning Free-Will is taken bodily from

Hegel: 'Freedom is knowledge of Necessity.' That, to many, seems a barren paradox. . . . Hegel, from whom Marx took the word, was deeply influenced by Spinoza, and in Spinoza we find a doctrine essentially the same. . . . The doctrine of Spinoza is that, in the 'natural' state, a man is the mere vehicle of 'passion': that is to say, he is the mere passive subject of experience. The necessary, salutary and crucial change takes place in him when 'passion' is transmuted into 'act.' This transmutation is achieved by the reason. . . . Put into a form parallel to that of the Marxian-Hegelian statement, Spinoza's doctrine is that 'Activity is knowledge of passivity.' The statements are, in reality, identical" (235-36).

9. In "Shakespeare and the Stoicism of Seneca" (1927), TSE argued: "Roman stoicism is an important ingredient in Elizabethan drama. It was natural that in a time like that of Elizabeth stoicism should appear. The original stoicism, and especially the Roman stoicism, was of course a philosophy suited to slaves: hence its absorption into early Christianity" (3.249).

10. *The Mystical Doctrine of St. John of the Cross*, trans. David Lewis, revised by Benedict Zimmerman, with an introduction by R. H. J. Steuart (London: Sheed & Ward, 1934), 25. This book was reviewed by TSE in the *Criterion* of July 1934 (5.108); he may have quoted from his earlier edition of St. John: *The Ascent of Mount Carmel*, Book II, chapter VII, section 4. Trans. David Lewis (London: Thomas Baker, 1906), 89.

11. *Read*: "la sua volontade è nostra pace" *Paradiso* III.85. *Trans*: "his will is our peace" (*DC3* 31). TSE corrected this misprint in his letter to the editor of *Time and Tide* of 2 Feb 1935 (5.206).

12. See "Little Gidding" III: "This is the use of memory: / For liberation – not less of love but expanding / Of love beyond desire, and so liberation / From the future as well as the past" (*CPP* 195 /*Poems1* 206).

13. *The Mystical Doctrine of St. John of the Cross*, 23; also *The Ascent of Mount Carmel*, book II, chapter V, 80.

T. S. Eliot's Notes on the Way [I]

To the Editor of *Time and Tide*

Time and Tide, 16 (19 Jan 1935) 95

Sir, – There is one point in Miss Rebecca West's letter in your issue of January 12th, which seems to me to call for an answer.[1] I feel that Miss West fails to represent accurately the attitude of Father Herbert Thurston; so that the uninformed reader might imagine that Fr. Thurston's interest in "supernormal manifestations" was of exactly the same kind as that of Messrs. Huxley or Mr. Gerald Heard.[2] One does not even need to *read* Fr. Thurston's books to be made aware of the difference. On the jacket of one that I have at hand are the words: "The Church has forbidden spiritualistic practices to her children, and that her prohibition is just and wise can be seen from evidence." And if the reader gets only as far as the Author's Preface, he will read that the three contentions of the book are as follows:

> The first is that genuine and inexplicable phenomena, even of the physical order, do occur in the presence of certain exceptionally constituted persons called 'mediums'; secondly, that for the mass of mankind, and notably for Catholics, spiritualistic practices, quite apart from the Church's prohibition, are dangerous and altogether undesirable; and thirdly, that people have learned nothing from their attempted intercourse with the spirits of the departed – an almost inevitable result when the fact is borne in mind that the identity of the supposed communicator can never be established with certainty.[3]

I am, etc.,
T. S. ELIOT

24, RUSSELL SQUARE, W.C.1

NOTES

1. The English critic and journalist Rebecca West, pen name of Cicely Isabel Fairfield (1892-1983), wrote in her letter: "as for knowing that 'even if one return from the dead, that will not settle the doubts of those who are not convinced by Moses and the prophets,' Mr. Eliot had better consult such Roman Catholic investigators of psychical research as Father Thurston, S.J.,

who within the Church and in the service of the Church has for many years studied supernormal manifestations. What can Mr. Eliot mean when he goes on to say: '*Nevertheless*, I respect Mr. Huxley . . .'" (43-44).

2. An English Jesuit priest and author, Herbert Henry Charles Thurston (1856-1939) wrote on theological and historical topics and was especially known for his work on spiritualism and parapsychological subjects. TSE met the historian and science writer Henry Fitzgerald Heard, known as Gerald Heard (1889-1971), in July 1935 to discuss his book *Science in the Making*.

3. *The Church and Spiritualism* (Milwaukee, WI: Bruce Publishing Company, 1933), xi. TSE wrote to Hope Mirrlees on 17 Jan 1935: "I have had your Thurston book posted back to you; to show that I made use of it (for which I am grateful to you) I enclose the Correspondence Column of *Time and Tide* – which incidentally seems to indicate that my second Note was a greater success than the first! It would seem that *Time and Tide* is read entirely by people who don't like what I say; in any case, these letters have a curious interest."

Notes on the Way [IV][1]

Time and Tide, 16 (26 Jan 1935) 118, 120-21

As this is the last of my ten-minute lunch hour sermons, I am tempted to try to deal, in a rambling way, with two or three subjects in the course of one Note. One is the curious subject of Work and Leisure: curious, because the majority of publicists seem to be convinced that work is a good thing, and that everybody ought to have plenty of it; and a minority are convinced that work is a bad thing, and that everybody should have as much leisure as possible. The latter allege, not without plausibility, that work formerly done by manual labour is increasingly performed by machines; and that if machines do the work, then they should support human beings in leisure, instead of merely throwing them "out of work." Shall we make it our ideal that everybody should be working, or that everyone should be free from work? We are offered this interesting alternative.

I have been reading, with considerable interest, *The Method of Freedom*, by Mr. Walter Lippmann.[2] I have not read much that Mr. Lippmann has written; but so far I can judge from this book he is what one would call a Conservative. Not that there is not a great deal that is valuable in Conservatism: furthermore, Mr. Lippmann seems to be an able and intelligent writer. I am concerned with Mr. Lippmann because he states explicitly that we must recognize "the right to work as one of the rights of man" (107). This statement puzzles me not only because I am not sure what is meant by "work," but because I am also in the dark as to what is meant by "right." Mr. Lippmann says, in the next sentence but one, that "All rights are, no doubt, ultimately a creation of the state and exist only where they are organized by the government." I hesitate to interpret Mr. Lippmann as meaning that the right to worship God, to say nothing of the right to marry and beget children, is ultimately a creation of the State; because, if Mr. Lippmann really means this, he is allowing far more power to the State than any Christian can possibly allow. But he adds that there are certain rights, which "except in nations that are sunk in absolutism" (so Mr. Lippmann is only a temperate absolutist after all) are "provided by the state." I should have thought that rights "provided by the State" were hardly

rights, but merely handsome concessions; however that may be, one of these "rights" is "the right of access to remunerative work."

The addition of the adjective "remunerative" to the substantive "work" suggests that in Mr. Lippmann's mind work and pay are closely associated. I think that several ideas are here expressed as one. There is the question (1) of the right to work, (2) of the right to *have some reward* for work (for "remunerative" does not necessarily imply money), and (3) of the right to be supported if there is no suitable remunerative work available. But Mr. Lippmann, identifying all these ideas, seems to be of the same mind as President Roosevelt: a programme of "useful public work on which any citizen may find employment when he needs it" [107].[3]

Mr. Lippmann has nothing to say about the important problem of how this useful public work is to be financed; and I do not mean to raise that question at the moment. All I wish to point out now is that there is a world of difference between seeing that certain public works ought to be carried out, and utilizing the unemployed for them, and, on the other hand, inventing public works for the unemployed to be busied with. The reclamation of the Italian marshes may belong to the class of public works that ought to be carried out, that ought, in fact, to have been done long ago; the building of motor roads to enable people prosperous enough to own motors to go anywhere *may* belong to the second.[4] And when Mr. Lippmann says that "The essential principle is to have on hand at all times varied projects of useful public work on which any citizen may find employment when he needs it" [107], does he realize how very varied those projects would have to be? What sort of useful public work could the Government provide for me, or for Mr. Lippmann if he could not earn a living by journalism? A small place in the Propaganda Bureau, perhaps.[5]

I find that for myself I want something different from the "right of access to remunerative work." I want the right to do the kind of work that I want to do, and I want to be supported while I do it. In this I feel at one with the members of monastic orders, although I have not their high standard of austerity. I have done a good deal of work, and I have no reason to complain of my remuneration; but the work for which I have been remunerated – or, in other words, the work by which I have made my living – has seldom been the work that I thought most worth doing. The work for which I have been paid – paid enough to live by, and not merely pocket money – has been work that in some cases a thousand or a hundred, in others a dozen men in this country could have done as well: never the work that I

could do (assuming that it was worth doing) better than anyone. And I have been paid (within my limited experience) in inverse ratio to the degree in which I could do that job better than anyone else.

* * * *

As soon as we dissociate the notion of "work" from the notion of "pay" we must alter our views about "work." Mr. Lippmann, and other orthodox economists, may hold that a person like myself is "remunerated" for the unpaid "work" he has done, in coinage of reputation, notoriety, etc.; or simply by the satisfaction of having done something original. If I affirmed that one is usually paid in debased currency, I might be accused of grumbling; but I do not see that the payment of ten pounds and the feeling of having got a load off his chest, together with a posthumous reputation, was "remunerative work" for John Milton.[6] I should like to see a society in which more unremunerative work was recognized. I resent Mr. Lippmann's pity towards the unemployed. For most of my life I have been one of the unemployed: unemployed, that is, for the things I wanted to do, and employed only in work that some number of other men could have done as well as I. He says: "their lot is pitiable. On the sheer ground of human decency, let alone of human brotherhood, we are called upon to relieve it" [109].

I say we are called upon to do more than relieve it; we are called upon to alter our attitude altogether. What I mean by human brotherhood is that each of us at the Last Judgement must bear not only his private sins but the sins of the society we live in and are part of and put up with. I pity a man for not being able to live properly; I do not pity him for being, in the modern industrial sense of the word, unemployed. I am sorry for a man for being employed on anything so useless as a giant liner – although, so far as his particular job is concerned, if it calls forth his individual aptitude and skill, he may get a legitimate pleasure out of doing it. No one doubts that there are great "public works" which ought to be done; but to look towards them as a panacea for unemployment is to pursue the wrong ends in the wrong way.[7] In so far, indeed, as the public works can be carried out just as well with more machinery and fewer men, no sensible Government would refuse to do so. What we need, I think, is to revise our notions of "work" and of "leisure": notions which seem to me to derive from the industrial view of society of the nineteenth century.

As I have little space left, I turn abruptly to another subject, which, however, touches the unemployment problem at one point: that of the

school-leaving age.[8] Here, again, is one of those problems about which everybody seems to be in accord, and which are, therefore, all the more tricky. Most people agree that everyone should have as much education as possible: some say, can we afford it? others, can we afford not to give it? Obviously, the argument that to keep young people in school for another year will relieve unemployment, is a mere hand-to-mouth device. One is not really interested in the reasoning of those who put this forward as a cogent reason for prolonging the period of schooling. The respectable argument is that it is for the good of the children themselves, and consequently for the good of the nation. At a recent meeting of the London Council of Social Service, Dr. J. J. Mallon referred to the ending of children's education at 14 as an "insufficient preparation [. . .] for life" and as "the most serious of all the social facts with which we ought to be concerned." Lord Allen, who spoke next, said that it would be fatal if children "were left to drift at a very emotional time in their lives in slum streets or overcrowded homes."[9] No one can disagree with that. Only it is a reminder that we need also to deal with the problems of slum streets and overcrowded homes (too overcrowded, indeed, to "drift" in). Furthermore, is the age of 14 to 15 a period of great emotional crisis? I should have thought that any age from 15 to 21 or even later might be equally or more emotional, according to each young person's nature: what are we going to do about that? And Lord Allen had said, a little earlier in his speech, that "It was said that there was less concern with standards of moral value throughout the world. In that case the raising of the school-leaving age at such a moment was imperative." I wish I could understand how the conclusion follows from the premises; something seems to be suppressed from the syllogism, some statement to the effect that schools do successfully inculcate standards of moral value. Lord Allen also said that "It was very dangerous to raise hope and stimulate self-confidence and then to refuse to satisfy those expectations." I should have thought that the more education we gave people the more we were doing to raise hopes of finding high-grade employment; and that unless we do something to satisfy those hopes when the schooling is at an end, the more the education the greater the disappointment: so that a young man might be still more disappointed on leaving school at 16 than at 15, and at 18 than at 17. Thus, he might become an "enemy of society": which is one thing that Lord Allen is anxious to avoid.[10]

Of course, I have nothing to work upon but the brief report in *The Times* of January 16th; and perhaps it is because this report had to be very

brief, that I cannot make sense out of Dr. J. Scott Lidgett's remarks.[11] And I do not wish my words to be construed as an attack upon the immediate proposal: on the whole, as things are, it seems to me a good thing. In any case, I strongly approve any system which would give opportunity for able boys to rise, especially if it allowed a compensatory number of incompetent boys born with greater advantages to sink. What I dislike, however, is the facile simplification of any problem. It is assumed that "education" – that is, the education provided in schools – is a good thing in itself; that it can be trusted to turn out a majority of "good citizens." Nobody seems to question the kind of education that is being given; so I presume that it is already so good that we need only proceed to provide a little more of the same; I presume that teachers are adequately paid, that they do not have to struggle with very large classes (for 15 to 20 in one class is enough) and that they have time to continue their own education, as every teacher should. For it does seem to me that the foundations are more important than the superstructure.

Finally, it seems possible that our present notions of education are apt to be too much those of an industrial society. Our education seems to be designed to turn out masses of industrial operatives and clerks, of the domestic influence upon whose childhood we expect nothing, but who we hope by some miracle of "education" will become good citizens with firm standards of moral value. And I wonder whether the tendency of education in country districts may not sometimes be to turn at least the more enterprising rustics into operatives. Here and there, at least, in the interest of efficiency, I am told that the village school is replaced by the larger central school to which children from several villages are conveyed by bus; thereby, perhaps, uprooting them from the local attachments, and preparing them to migrate to where they will find a more interesting life; a life the superiority of which perhaps nothing in their school education leads them to question. We do need to think a great deal harder and more patiently about the nature of education; as we do also about the nature of work and leisure, war and peace. We need to think about the relation of one thing to another, and to be a little clearer about our "standards of moral value."

I am grateful to the Editor of *Time and Tide* for generously allowing me to express my views in these columns, and I should like to end on a pleasant note with one quotation without any carping comment. It is from one of Lord Allen's compeers, Lord Snell, who, in an advertisement of the R. P. A. Ltd., in *The Times* for January 15th, declares: "The sentimental and emotional

qualities of man have been designedly nurtured, extolled, and exploited by Churches and religious organisations for ecclesiastical ends, whereas reason, like Cinderella, has been starved, discouraged, and ignored."[12] As my readers will have discerned, I am always on the side of Cinderella.

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. This is the fourth and final contribution to a series begun on 5 Jan. See 5.154, 5.159, 5.166.

2. London: Allen & Unwin, 1934. TSE consistently capitalizes Lippmann's "state" and "government." Lippmann was a member of TSE's class of 1910 at Harvard, and TSE had discussed his *A Preface to Politics* (1913) in "[The Relationship between Politics and Metaphysics]" (1914) (1.90).

3. As part of the New Deal, President Franklin D. Roosevelt (1882-1945) created in May 1933 the Works Progress Administration (WPA), whereby unemployed workers carried out public works projects, such as building schools, hospitals, and playgrounds in return for financial assistance.

4. The Pontine Marshes, an area of former marshland in central Italy, were being reclaimed by the Fascist government. An article in the *Times* of 19 Dec 1934 reported the inauguration by Mussolini of "the new province of Littoria – Italy's ninety-third province – which . . . embraces the whole of the area reclaimed or in process of reclamation under the Pontine Marshes reclamation scheme" (13).

5. The War Propaganda Bureau, more commonly known as Wellington House, was Britain's most important official propaganda department during World War I. Organized under the Foreign Office, it addressed itself to foreign nations, especially Britain's allies and neutral countries.

6. On 27 Apr 1667, Milton sold the publishing rights to *Paradise Lost* for ten pounds.

7. Lippmann writes: "It is possible then to establish the right to work by projecting public works and executing them so as to offset scarcity and glut in the market for private labor. The operating principle should clearly be to pay wages which represent an adequate minimum in the locality" (108-09).

8. The government was considering proposals to raise the school-leaving age from fourteen to fifteen. Several letters to the editor of the *Times* were printed on this topic in Jan 1935.

9. A report of the meeting in the *Times* of 16 Jan, entitled "Training of Good Citizens," summarized the speeches by James (Jimmy) Joseph Mallon (1875-1961), warden of Toynbee Hall, and by the politician and pacifist Reginald Clifford Allen, 1st Baron Allen of Hurtwood (1889-1939) (7).

10. "If we did that we should feed the mood of resentment in the world and help to make young people the enemies of society" (7).

11. The report summarized the speech by the Wesleyan Methodist minister and educationist John Scott Lidgett (1854-1953) thus:

> Dr. J. Scott Lidgett said that reference had been made to religious difficulties in connexion with the education question that had been raised. The difficulties were chiefly due, not to

religion in itself but to religion as it became concerned with political relationships. It was the political aspect of the controversy that had produced a good many of the old-standing controversies; indeed, sometimes the way in which the difficulties had been prosecuted had been more irreligious than religious.

The two great principles that should guide the citizens of this country, and not least the members of all religious communities, were, first, that no child should suffer in its prospects by the religious faith of its parents; and, next, that the churches should combine and be ready to surrender, and if need be to sacrifice, to prevent the democracy from supposing that it was religion, and the churches in particular, which stood in the way of justice being done to their children.

12. The socialist politician Henry Snell, 1st Baron Snell (1865-1944), made this statement in an advertisement for The Rationalist Press Association Limited printed under the title "An Appeal for Reason" in the *Times* of 15 Jan 1935, 17.

Mr. Milne and War [I]

To the Editor of *Time and Tide*

Time and Tide, 16 (26 Jan 1935) 124

Sir, – In his letter in your issue of January 19th, Mr. A. A. Milne says that he supposed that when he had finished thinking about war, everybody would know exactly what he thought. Not knowing that Mr. Milne had begun thinking about war, I did not know that he had finished. Long before I had finished reading his book, I knew what he *felt* about war; and with his feelings I have a warm sympathy. If everyone felt about war as Mr. Milne does, I am convinced that we should never have war; if everyone thought as he does, I do not know what would happen.[1]

I cannot see that there is anything absurd in the question, "Why do you consider it important that people should not lose their lives?" though I dare say the "militarist" who asked the question was an absurd person.[2] But Mr. Milne's answer, especially now that he has underlined one phrase, does seem to me absurd. "If you take away his life, you leave him, *in this world*, nothing." In other words, if you kill a man, you kill him. But M. de la Palisse, apparently, is not dead yet.[3]

Mr. Milne presently makes an assertion, or to be more exact, a supposition, which I find a little more difficult. He says he should have supposed that you could condemn adultery without asserting that there is no higher value than not living in adultery. I should say that unless you can affirm some higher value than "non-adultery," you have no business to condemn adultery, which in itself differs from war in being, as a rule, pleasant for both parties engaged. It is quite a different thing to assert that non-adultery is a positive value, and to assert that chastity is a positive value. You might, for the sake of argument, assert the value of non-adultery from the point of view of eugenics; you only assert the value of chastity from the point of view of religion. To complete the analogy, we might say that Mr. Milne is in favour of non-war, and I am in favour of peace.

As for the belief that there are things worth fighting for, and worth dying for, but not worth bombing babies for, I should suppose that the *intent* to bomb babies was one which no practical militarist had ever cherished. I have no militarist friends, but I should suppose that most

militarists would declare that intentional bombing of babies was a waste of bombs, inasmuch as they would all count upon a war being over before the babies reached fighting age. I would distinguish between intentional bombing of babies, and the bombing of some babies while aiming to hit a railway station. But if Mr. Milne, and Miss West, think that I am defending unlimited warfare, they are mistaken. I only say that I dislike as much the idea of people being killed in the firing line, as behind the firing line; I object as much to the killing of men as of women and children.[4]

The "common military argument" that a "soldiers' war is more humane and gentlemanly than an economic war" is of course nonsense; but not apparently to me in quite the same sense as to Mr. Milne.[5] For my point was exactly that a soldiers' war is the outcome of an economic war; I suggested that we ought to enquire more closely into the economic causes of war and try to stop *them*; but Mr. Milne still ignores this point.

I am obliged to Mr. Milne, at any rate, for his civility. I do not find anything in Miss West's letter that calls for comment, but there are two points in Mr. Brophy's letter which need mention. Mr. Brophy says that I insinuate that "Mr. Milne and those who agree with him advocate peace chiefly out of a desire for their own personal comfort and security" [96].[6] I meant nothing of the kind. I did suggest that peace might be more pleasant for Mr. Milne (and for myself for that matter) than for some other less fortunate members of society. I was not suggesting that Mr. Milne hated war because it interfered with his personal comfort and security. If the tone of his book is any indication, I am sure that Mr. Milne would cheerfully lay down his own life to avert war, if that were possible. Mr. Brophy then asks whether I cannot realize that "to go on living is . . . a necessary condition of all human activity" [96]. I do realize this. For Mr. Milne had already told us that when you have killed a man, he is dead.

I am, etc.,
T. S. ELIOT

24, RUSSELL SQUARE, W. C. 1

NOTES

1. In the previous issue, Milne had responded to TSE's earlier critique in "Notes on the Way [II]" of Milne's pacifist views of war in *Peace with Honour* (5.159). Here TSE paraphrases Milne's statement in the opening of his reply: "And it seemed to me that an interesting difference between a confused, temporal thinker like myself and a precise, eternal thinker like Mr. Eliot

was just this: that when I had finished thinking about war, everybody knew exactly what I thought, but that Mr. Eliot's thoughts on war gave nobody any clue as to what he thinks about it. In my book I said . . . that if everybody in Europe thought as I did, there would be no more war in Europe. If everybody thought as Mr. Eliot, would there be no more war? . . . I do not even know if he would be glad to wake tomorrow into a warless world" (94).

2. Milne writes: "He quotes me as saying 'Death is final.' He does not mention that, when I said this, I was answering a militarist's absurd question: 'Why do you consider it so important that people should not lose their lives?'" (94).

3. See "Mr. Milne and War [II]" (5.209 n.5).

4. Rebecca West, whose letter is the second printed in the issue of 19 Jan (94-95), quotes a paragraph from TSE's "Notes on the Way [II]" of 12 Jan and asks: "Now, could there be a grosser confusion than this argument that war against civilians, because it is not new and is necessary, is therefore not horrible?" (95).

5. "When I am meeting the common military argument that anyhow a soldiers' war is more humane and gentlemanly than an economic war, I don't defend the economic system, and say that we all live happily under Peace" (94).

6. The novelist John Brophy (1899-1965) wrote in his letter in the issue of 19 Jan that TSE's "criticism and his exposition of general ideas astound me" (95).

TSE wrote to Pound ("Podesta") on 17 Jan in Uncle Remus dialect: "I am being Abused by the rabble in Time and Tide (2 ½ pages of letters) for sugestin that if people left off getting up prayer meetins and rallies on behalf of Peace and tried to think out the economic causes of modern war, something might be accomplished. Podesta, they call me a militarist, an imbecile and a vulgar person. God dambit you think that I just set in my rockincheer and chaw terbakker but I tell you that rockincheer has a steel back to it like Al Capone's and I have to wear steel combinations too."

The Christian in the Modern World

This unpublished lecture was presented at the annual meeting of the Church Union Literature Association at Church House on 31 Jan 1935, with the Rev. Charles Harris, Prebendary of Hereford Cathedral and chairman of the Book Committee, presiding. The Church Union, founded in 1934 by merger of the English Church Union and the Anglo-Catholic Congress, aimed to promote High Church principles in the Church of England. TSE was Secretary of the Book Committee, which oversaw the publication of suitable ecclesiastical and theological books. A brief report of the lecture appeared in the *Times* of 2 Feb under the title "Church Literature": "The aim of the association was that the Catholic Movement should have the finest theological and scholarly support that it could get" (15).

I do not propose to go into any details of what is called "Christian Sociology." And a good deal of what I have to say will already have been said by others: I shall be satisfied if I can make one or two points as a contribution to a literature which is growing larger all the time. What position should the Christian take up in the modern state and the modern community? Every season a number of books appear on this subject: a week from today there will be published a book of 526 pages called "Christianity and the Social Revolution," by several authors including the Regius Professor of Divinity at Cambridge, and the Revd. Conrad Noel.[1] But for the moment I wish only to recommend one shilling pamphlet, "Church, Community and State" by J. H. Oldham, published by the Student Christian Movement Press.[2]

So long as people were able to believe – most of them – that the world was making continuous progress in civilization, it was possible for most people to make easy terms with contemporary society. Society was improving, so it seemed, almost automatically, in every respect except belief in Christ. Everyone was to become more prosperous, or, if not exactly prosperous, at least better looked after; war was to become an anachronism as soon as a number of scattered savage tribes were reduced to civility; and even these outbreaks did not affect the peaceful life of the member of urban society. The social and economic order was far from perfect, but it was on the way towards perfection; and the individual who played his part in it, and bringing up a family in it, and doing his duty in churchgoing and philanthropy, was doing all that could be expected of him. True, certain

eminent Victorians had become eminent by a career of protesting against the state of affairs: in the Church, the men of the Oxford movement and F. D. Maurice;[3] outside of it, men like Carlyle, Ruskin and Arnold: but an age which is sure of itself is only flattered by condemnation; and indeed it is doubtful whether even these men saw, except in flashes, the full iniquity of the age in which they lived. And in the last twenty years we have been more unsettled by events, than we could be by two generations of prophets. I should say, in the last fifteen years: for it is the period 1920-1935 that has broken the illusions of a century.

Compare, for instance, the attitude towards war in 1914 and in 1935. In 1914, as I remember, a general war came as an unexpected interruption of the march of progress. Somebody or other had decided to interfere with progress; once this somebody had been properly dealt with, progress would go on as before, and thereafter no one would dare to imitate the example of the culprit. In 1914 we still believed in culprits: everyone else was virtuous, and probably heroic. The majority of people believed, or were persuaded to believe, in a righteous war to end war. There was a minority, a mixed minority, of people who refused to engage in the war. Some suffered more than others. Some objected because they saw how little good would come from so much evil, because, in a general way, they foresaw what would happen afterwards. Others objected because they believed war to be always and everywhere wrong: and for these I have only respect. But "pacifism" in those days comprehended a considerable variety of people, with various motives.

In 1935, what is the difference? There are still, I believe, the small body of people who believe that no war is ever right, the few genuine believers in passive resistance: people who have remained perfectly consistent, whose belief is tenable, and who cannot be refuted. But they are now separated from their previous associates. No belief held in 1914, except theirs, remains tenable.[4] We cannot, after the treaty of Versailles, believe that any war will end war; we believe rather that war breeds war: certainly that a bad peace generates war. We can no longer believe that any war is quite unprovoked: for we see that the nations which are the most pacific are those which gain the most by the preservation of the status quo, and we see that those which are the most militaristic, in Europe, are those whose vanity has been wounded. We are much more aware, furthermore, of both economic and emotional causes of war: and many of us are inclined to think that we cannot hope to eliminate war until we alter the economic system. We are much

more alert to the advantages of war over peace, for the solution of economic domestic difficulties: we are aware of the unpleasant fact that when the nation is at war, the people do not suffer from unemployment, undernourishment, and boredom.

As for those who wish for peace, their ship has been split on the rock of the League of Nations. This ill-omened organisation, formed from a muddle of ill-founded Christian and humanitarian principles, has finally revealed its true character. It was a league of those idealists who wish peace at any price, even at the price of gaining more from peace than their neighbours, and those who see quite well that peace is for their interest. The League of Nations has been to the advantage of Britain, France, and those smaller states which are more afraid of losing what they have, than ambitious to gain what they have not. It could not have been founded without the support of many people who had at least a partially Christian desire for peace for its own sake. Its Christian character should have been finally and publicly denied by the adhesion of Russia: yet at that time there were many Christians, no doubt, who believed that the adhesion of Russia was worth more than the defection of Germany. The eventual collapse of the League of Nations should have been apparent to any Christian from the beginning: for the foundations of the League were not really Christian. It has shown one thing: it has shown that no pacifism that is not Christian pacifism is genuine. For it is the pacifists who pinned their faith on the League of Nations who are now most bellicose.

In 1935, furthermore, the Christian has difficulties about domestic politics. Can he accept the present regime? Can he accept Communism? Can he accept Fascism? The answer to all three of these questions, I think, must be, No.

There are quite sincere Christians who beg us to say Yes to each of these three questions. As for Fascism, Mussolini's article on that subject in the *Encyclopaedia Italiana*, reprinted as a pamphlet by the Hogarth Press for a shilling,[5] should convince us that it requires a devotion to the State which is wholly incompatible with Christianity. As for Communism, we have only to recall its origins. We must remember that Marx, a Jew who had repudiated his religion, was a religious thinker before he was a communist: his communism followed his atheism; he began as a disciple of Feuerbach.[6] Various publicists will tell you, either that Marxism, with a few important modifications, is the real Christian attitude; or that Fascism, again with a few important modifications, is the Christian attitude. What I would

affirm is, that no political philosophy can appeal to the world unless it contains some of the Christian elements; that if it contains those Christian elements upon which your attention is fixed, it will be seductive: but that, before accepting it, you should consider those Christian elements which are omitted, as well as those that are included.

I should like, at this point, to make a distinction which is often ignored. For the Christian, to support a system which is in existence, and to give assent to one which is as yet ideal, are two different things. The latter implies much greater belief and much stronger adherence. To try to make Christian a state of affairs in existence, is not to approve it: but to work for a state of affairs towards which other people, who are not Christians, aim, is to compromise Christian aims with secular. That is not to say that the Christian always accepts the actual condition of things: but his acceptance of what is, does not compromise him so much with the world as his acceptance of what may be. The Christian can accept a fact which is incompatible with Christianity: he cannot accept a theory which is incompatible with Christianity. One is committing oneself much further, by accepting a view of how things ought to be, than by putting up with things as they are.

I do not suggest that the Christian cannot learn from either fascism or communism. In so far as both philosophies differ from the actual way of things, they may have elements of good in them; indeed, without these elements of good, and without their explicit condemnations of the evils of nineteenth-century democracy, they could not have the appeal that they have. And I know that able Christians of good faith have advocated a possible Christian fascism, or a Christian communism, which should be different from any of the varieties that have been put into practice. But I think we may say that such varieties would be so different from the actual and historical forms of these political philosophies, that there would be no good reason for calling them by the same name.[7†] What is indispensable to these forms is what they have taken from Christianity: and if they had to give this back, they would be deprived of something essential to their driving force. One might say that it is better to be a fascist, perhaps still better to be a communist, than to be a person denying both of them and denying Christianity as well. A good deal of misunderstanding might be cleared up, if we could realise that the whole conception of political organisation must be a different thing for the Christian and for the non-Christian: they start from different assumptions, and they come to different conclusions.

Of the two philosophies, it is apparently communism that has the closer analogy to Christianity. But the closer the analogy, the more completely can the secular system do without Christianity; and we say that what it takes from Christianity is less essential than what it repudiates. And one of the dangerous delusions that the Christian must avoid is that of the perfect human society situated somewhere in the future. It was one of the limitations of Judaism that it dreamt of such a future, a limitation that Christianity outgrew, and which we now see returning. "Communism," in the words of one of its recent converts, "looks on coercion, the dictatorship of the proletariat, neither as the redemption which it is to the Fascist, nor as an inevitable and perpetual punishment of original sin, but solely as a transitory means to an end."[8] Communism looks therefore to an eventual perfection of human nature to be brought about exclusively from outside, so far as the great majority of mankind is concerned, a kind of gradual compulsory conversion by the economic rearrangement of life. Now the Christian does not deny the enormous importance of economic pressure, the appalling degree of real slavery that exists in the world to-day. He does not deny that great numbers of human beings live under conditions such that we cannot expect them to be Christians; and that we must share the responsibility for the spiritual darkness in which they are left. But he has always maintained that our duty to change our environment, the environment of our fellow-human-beings, for the better, must be balanced by our duty to change ourselves.

Communism has inherited from the nineteenth century the faith in gradual improvement of society by improvement of material conditions. In that age of expansion man was exulting in what was called the "conquest of nature." And when, early in this century, he turned to examine his own mind, he adopted the same attitude towards it as he had found so successful, apparently, with the outside world. Psychoanalysis is an odd hybrid: it includes the rediscovery of much that was part of traditional Christian knowledge of the soul. But it also included another attitude towards the inner life, that of something manageable as the outer world was, a determined sequence of events which could be understood and rearranged by the man with special knowledge. You put your soul into the hands of the specialist, as you put your body into his hands. Naturally, psychoanalysis has proved of more value in dealing with the less conscious types of human being, than with those gifted with more consciousness and power of self-understanding.[9†]

I have said that the Christian cannot accept either the present state of affairs, or the alternatives offered by fascism and communism. Many of the most conscientious and intelligent, in this quandary, turn to other forms of more limited change. That is to say, they recognise the existence of economic evils which intelligence alone could put right; and they incline to believe that intelligence could bring about an economic system in which the Christian life would be more possible than it is to-day. For indeed, outside of a self-supporting monastery, or the hypothetical desert island, it is almost impossible to live at all without in some degree compounding with evil. If we have to earn our living, we may be engaged in a struggle to outwit competitors in producing a commodity no better than theirs; or it may be in producing a commodity that the world would be better without. If we do not have to earn a living, we are freer, certainly, but with no better conscience, for we live by lending money, or by drawing profits from businesses over which we have no control, of the conduct of which we know nothing, and towards whose doings we are wholly irresponsible. Any scheme for the reconstruction of the economic world, therefore, which will operate for social justice, and which will not demand the absolute adherence, the surrender of Christian allegiance, that fascism or communism demands, has a strong appeal. And I would not for a moment discourage such interest. Only here again, I would add a reservation. I should say that economic changes are desirable and should be made when, so far as human reason can discover – and this includes the general reason of the thoughtful Christian as well as the specialized reason of the economic expert – the predictable results will be good. Any great economic change is certain to have far-reaching effects which cannot be predicted: we do not know in advance even where to look for such changes. We must take the risk. We are doing that in any case, even if we let things drift; any piece of simple legislation may have unexpected consequences; everything that happens has unexpected consequences. But we must remember that economics cannot be abstracted from life. As it may have moral consequences, so also it rests upon obscure and confused moral postulates: our opinion of the economics, indeed, must rest in part on our opinion of the economist. Furthermore, we are working with men of good will who are not Christians: and as I have said, the way in which a Christian accepts any political or social philosophy must be different from the way in which the non-Christian accepts the same philosophy.

It is impossible, certainly, for the Christian not to strive and hope for a better state of things on earth, though without that false assumption of

the excessive value of the future which communism inherits from nineteenth-century Liberalism, and without that worship of the machine, that faith in gadgets and inventions, which is part of the same Liberal faith. The Christian is inclined to believe that human nature is more or less static, and that the man of a thousand years hence will have the same strength and weakness, the same capacity for glory and degradation, as the man of to-day; yet he will have a permanent faith in human nature, so far as human beings surrender themselves to God, which will never lapse into the rather boyish cynicism to which fascists, and even communists, are inclined. He believes in social rearrangement as well as in personal conversion; and while assured that the only good world will be a Christian world, is equally anxious to remove positive evil. I have suggested that as things are it is difficult for any of us, leading private lives in modest circumstances, to be uncontaminated: indeed, none of us is so. For those leading public lives, the difficulty is still greater. In an essay by that remarkable Christian philosopher, Jacques Maritain, I have recently read these words:

> In this way (the separation of the secular from the spiritual) the action of States as well as the conduct of wars and conspiracies, revolutions, acts of violence and the rest came to be the work of a tiny group of men who sacrificed their virtue on the altar of public welfare in much the same way that prostitutes sacrifice their honour to maintain the peace of families.[10]

I was immediately struck by the similarity of this view to that taken by a very different kind of political thinker indeed, the late Frederick Scott Oliver, in the last, posthumous volume of his brilliant book *The Endless Adventure*. He devotes a section entitled The Morals of the Politician to this theme, quoting with approval a sentence attributed to Disraeli: "Real statesmen are inspired by nothing else than their instinct for power and love of country,"[11] and he sums up in his own words:

> This, however, is certain, that in order to get power and keep it a man must be prepared to do things which neither a punctilious country gentleman nor an honest trader could do in his private capacity without losing his self-respect.

To which I would only add: that the difference between the politician and the "honest trader" cannot be drawn so sharply as Oliver draws it, and that

the bigger business becomes, the more the honest trader finds himself in the position of the politician.

I have reverted to this point to make a further one. In the difficulty that I have stated, that the Christian cannot accept the world as it is, or accept either of the social alternatives of fascism and communism pressed upon him, or embrace any secular social policy without reserve, should he not withdraw from the world altogether? We are certainly a minority, even in what are called Christian countries; we find the minds of the people about us growing more and more alien, so that on vital matters we often find we have no common assumptions on which to begin discussion. That distinguished sculptor and interesting writer on social problems, Mr. Eric Gill, says that the Christians are already back in the catacombs.[12] But unfortunately, we are not able to withdraw from the world, and we are tarred with its brush. The most successful case of withdrawal from the world is the Christian conscientious objector. This is a type of man that I respect; yet even the conscientious objector's attitude in time of war and conscription can hardly satisfy his conscience completely. For the responsibility for war does not begin, nowadays, just before the outbreak of war; and we can no longer try to fix that responsibility on a few evil men. The whole state of society during peace, in which we are all implicated, has led up to the war: so that one is not guiltless of war merely by refusing to participate. One must at least strive to understand the causes of war and do what little one can to set them right. I am not wholly in sympathy with those who maintain that the only important causes of war are economic; I believe that with mankind unregenerate we shall always have danger of war; but at least we can try, by dealing with economic causes, to obviate the danger of this kind of war. To cry for peace, but ignore the causes of war that are capable of being dealt with by intelligence alone, is worse than folly. There is a difference too between maintaining that war is evil, as the Christian does, and maintaining that peace is a positive good, as the sentimentalist does. Indeed, in the modern world, war is a pleasanter state of things than peace. Peace is good because it is a good means, peace is good negatively, war is bad positively, because it involves killing our brothers in Christ primarily, and secondarily because of the other spiritual evils which it brings about or fosters.

What I think that the Christian in the world needs to remind himself of, and I find it a thought which I have to repeat constantly, and which is never fully learned, is of what is necessary and of what is not necessary. The Christian is constantly assailed, and more particularly by the communist,

for wearing his Christianity as a cloak for his self-interest; and certainly too many Christians fail to dissociate their Christian faith from their worldly habits of mind and prejudices, or cling to worldly beliefs with a tenacity only appropriate to Christian Faith. I must ask constantly, what is there that I have that is really necessary for me, in this world, except the opportunity to use such natural gifts as God has given me, and the opportunity to practise the Christian Faith? And of the things that are not necessary, what price am I paying for them? To live as if tomorrow might bring any worldly disaster, or illness or death, and yet live serenely, without attachment to material objects, and giving to human beings that love which is proper after the love of God; that is hard work. And if we repudiate non-Christian philosophies of life in the name of Christianity, then we have a great responsibility to repudiate them in that name alone, and not in the name of worldly attachments. And worldly attachments may be just as much to prejudices and mental habits, as to possessions.

This is one side of the Christian attitude. The other is that of action, both of such action as Christians can take among themselves and such as they can take in collaboration with other men of good-will. That is cooperating with men whose aims at best fall short of ours, and therefore are different from ours. Such cooperation cannot be useful if we merely sink our differences to a common level of zeal; it can only be safely practised if at the same time we labour to understand better and grasp more thoroughly our own beliefs and their consequences. Social action needs to be balanced by theology. I should like in closing to quote an admirable paragraph from the pamphlet by Dr. J. H. Oldham which I mentioned at the beginning.[13]

> [No one can occupy himself for long with the subject of the Church, the State and the Community without becoming aware that the fundamental problems are problems of theology. He will come to realise, further, that in regard to these theological questions there are wide divergences of view among Christians. He will, in fact, make the disquieting discovery that at a moment when ecumenical Christianity is engaged in a fight for its existence it finds itself deeply divided. The most important divisions by no means always coincide with confessional differences; they are often found within the same confession. Deeper in many cases than the differences which separate one confession from another are disagreements in the conception of God, in the understanding of His relation to the world and His purpose for mankind, in the interpretation of the

nature of man and of the Christian ethic. . . . The critical nature of the conflict which Christianity has to wage makes it necessary that these deep underlying differences, in so far as they exist, should be brought into the open and frankly faced. But if there is need that they should be openly debated, it is essential to remember that the purpose of the debate is not to engage in theological discussion for its own sake but to arrive at truth which will serve us in a conflict in which vital issues are at stake. The object is not successfully to confute an opponent but through an enlarged understanding to gain new strength for the battle.]

NOTES

1. *Christianity and the Social Revolution*, ed. John Lewis, Karl Polanyi, and Donald K. Kitchin (London: Gollanz, 1935). Charles E. Raven (1885-1964), Regius Professor of Divinity at Cambridge (1932-50) and member of the Church Union editorial board, wrote the Introduction to the collection. The essays mostly covered Christianity and Communism and included a five-part essay on "Jesus" by Rev. Conrad Noel (1869-1942), Bishop of Thaxted, "The Good Life" by W. H. Auden, and "Christian Politics and Communist Religion" by Reinhold Niebuhr.

TSE gave a version of this lecture on 21 Nov 1935 as "The Christian and the Modern State" in a series of lunch-hour talks organized by Rev. P. T. R. Kirk at the Christ Church Vicarage, Westminster.

2. *Church, Community and State: A World Issue*, with an introduction by the Bishop of Chichester, published in Jan 1935. Joseph Houldsworth Oldham (1874-1969), ecumenist and theologian, founder (1912) and editor (until 1927) of the *International Review of Missions*, and author of *Christianity and the Race Problem* (1924). Oldham's 1935 pamphlet grew out of his commitment to a new missionary approach for engaging worldwide secular culture and contained an authorial note: "Written at the request of the Universal Christian Council to explain the reasons which have promoted the holding of the proposed conference [World Conference on Church, Community and State, Oxford, 1937] and the general lines which the preparatory work will follow."

3. F. D. Maurice, Anglican theologian, Christian Socialist, social reformer, and Knightsbridge Professor of Moral Philosophy at Cambridge, was a founder of Queen's College for the education of governesses in 1848, the Working Men's College in 1854, and the Working Women's College in 1874. TSE briefly mentions the possible influence of Coleridge on Maurice in his 1934 biographical postcard on Coleridge (5.62).

4. In his July 1936 "Commentary," TSE discusses Canon Dick Sheppard, Aldous Huxley, and other British pacifists (5.380). In the following "Commentary" (Oct 1936), he discusses Lord Allen of Hurtwood's *Peace in our Time*, again alluding to Sheppard's Peace Pledge Union (5.394). TSE would also have been familiar with Beverley Nichols's pacifist tract *Cry Havoc!* – reviewed negatively by Herbert Read in the Oct 1933 *Criterion*.

5. Benito Mussolini, *The Political and Social Doctrine of Fascism*, trans. Jane Soames (London, 1933). The article first appeared in 1932 as "Dottrina politica e sociale," the first section of a larger entry on Fascism in vol 14 of *Enciclopedia italiana*.

6. In 1841, the German philosopher Ludwig von Feuerbach (1804-72) published his influential critique of Christianity, *Das Wesen des Christentums*, trans. Marian Evans (George Eliot) as *The Essence of Christianity* (1854). Karl Marx wrote his eleven-point "1. Ad Feuerbach" in 1845 as an outline for a proposed book by Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Die deutsche Ideologie*, unpublished in Marx's lifetime. An edited version of Marx's eleven points, titled "Theses on Feuerbach" and distilled by Engels, appeared as an appendix to Engels's *Ludwig Feuerbach* (1888); the full text of the Marx-Engels work was finally published in German and Russian translation in 1924, the English translation (*The German Ideology*) in 1938.

7†. TSE has written in the left margin after this sentence: "F[ascism] & C[ommunism] tainted by their origins. Marx. Feuerbach."

8. W. H. Auden, "The Good Life," in *Christianity and the Social Revolution*, 49; rpt. in W. H. Auden, *Prose and Travel Books in Prose and Verse*, vol 1, ed. Edward Mendelson (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1996), 122.

9†. TSE has written in the left margin between the end of this paragraph and the beginning of the next: "We must not assume that F[ascism] and C[ommunism] cannot succeed."

10. Maritain, *Freedom in the Modern World*, trans. Richard O'Sullivan (London: Sheed & Ward, 1935), 158; TSE's parentheses.

11. In vol 3 of *The Endless Adventure* (London: Macmillan, 1935), the Scots political writer and historian F. S. Oliver (1864-1934) cites the German statesman Prince Bernhard von Bülow as the source of "this saying, which he attributes to Disraeli" (143). TSE returns to the unverified quotation in the second chapter of *The Idea of a Christian Society* (1939): "One may even accept F. S. Oliver's affirmation – following Buelow, following Disraeli – that real statesmen are inspired by nothing else than their instinct for power and their love of country" (5.696). TSE inscribed in his copy of vol 1 of *The Endless Adventure* (1930): "Fred Oliver was kind to me, and helped the Criterion to survive."

12. In *Money & Morals* (London: Faber, 1934), Eric Gill observes: "We are not a survival of mediaevalism. The mediaeval supremacy of the Church has not survived. We are back in the catacombs – whether we like it or not" (59).

13. The unidentified passage, separately read to the audience from Oldham's *Church, Community and State: A World Issue*, was not copied into the typescript. The passage is editorially supplied from the only marked and dog-eared passage in TSE's copy (30-31).

Literature and the Modern World

The Teaching Church Review: A Journal for Students of Religion, 5 (Feb 1935) 11-15[1]

People may be conscious of their age without knowing very much about it. I believe that most of us are influenced, more than we realize, by a kind of deterministic conception of history. That may be all right for the Marxian, who has a reasoned theory about it; but it has no advantage as an unconscious assumption. The assumption of the inevitability of progress has, we all know, been discarded in its nineteenth-century form: it is the butt of popular philosophers like Dean Inge.[2] But actually, what we have discarded is a particular variety of the theory of progress: that which is associated with Darwin, Tennyson, free-trade, and the industrial development of the latter part of the last century: in short, with Liberalism.[3] Our beliefs have been shaken in detail: for instance, no one now is convinced of the automatic beneficence of scientific invention. Invention may be applied to destructive, rather than to creative activity; and it throws people out of work and it stimulates production while it diminishes consumption: these are commonplaces. Nevertheless, we retain the essential of the doctrine of progress: we have no faith in the present.

In popularizing the belief in the future in a crude form we have, I think, a good deal for which to thank Mr. H. G. Wells. His superficial philosophy has had an extensive influence. Whatever Mr. Wells may explicitly disclaim, I think that the effect of his writing has been something like this: to propagate a belief that the value of the present resides in its service to the future, and nowhere else. Morality consists in working to forward the happiness of future generations, "happiness" of a not remarkably spiritualized kind. We are to find our happiness in scientific work which will benefit future humanity, and for the rest get anything out of life that we can. I do not want to let my words be twisted to suggest that we should take no concern with the lives of future generations. It is very much our business. What I object to is the complete dislocation of values. It is important not only that we should try to want the right things for the future. It is important also that we should have just as much respect for ourselves; and remember that we, as human beings, are individually just as valuable as the men of the future. Mr. Wells seems to propagate a strange false humility of

evolutionism: as the higher apes are to us, he says in effect, so are we to the men of the future; and as we regard our animal ancestors, whether apes, lemurs or opossums, so will they of the future regard us. This is, of course, the quite natural corollary of a naïf faith in perpetual evolution, combined with a denial of any sharp dividing line between the human and the animal: that is, a denial of the human soul.[4]

Now, one effect of this is to justify a contempt for humanity as we find it to-day, and the admission of any means, at whatever cost to human dignity, which will bring about the kind of future which Mr. Wells contemplates with such rapture. I confess that I cannot see why we should take such pains to produce a race of men, millennia hence, who will only look down upon *us* as apes, lemurs or opossums. It seems a thankless labour. We must affirm that there is no more value in the future than there is in the present. That is to say, we must affirm the eternal against the transient; the eternal which has been realized in the past, can be realized in the present; and it is our business to try to bring about a future in which the obstacles to this realization will be less, for the mass of humanity, than they are to-day. And these obstacles are not all of a material kind; they are in ourselves too. Our attitude may seem less ambitious than that of Mr. Wells; but it is more definite. It is simply that of the humble parent who wants his child to have a better chance in life than he had, and to lead a better life than he has led.

I said at the beginning that this modern eschatology begins in optimism and easily ends in despair. But I do not draw the moral of the proprietor whose granary was full.[5] We are obviously at the end of an age, oppressed by the sense of corruption and decay, and fearful of the kinds of change which may come, since some change must. And since our minds must needs be filled with thought about the future, thought affecting our own action to-morrow perhaps, and our consciences disturbed by what we find about us and within us, it is all the more important to keep our heads, our sense of values; all the more important that we should hold fast to the things which were, and are, and shall be, world without end.[6]

My immediate occupation, however, is with the effect upon modern literature of this dislocation of values and this moral subservience of the present to the future. As a kind of consultant, as well as a potential impresario, I have to see a good deal of what is being written, in some forms, by those much younger than myself. In the better writers there is strongly developed a kind of social conscience, a notion that literature ought to be

useful to society. In the inferior writers this conscience may, of course, take the form merely of a determination not to miss the boat; but I confidently assure you of the existence of a fair proportion of sincerity. Now this devotion to society may involve precisely the same dislocation of values as the devotion to the future; and I propose to try to come to a conclusion about the proper relation of the poet to-day to himself and to society. The preoccupation of which I speak is inevitable, it is right; but how is it to be adjusted to the permanent values which literature is supposed to realize?

Here we get to the point. Should a literary artist have this acute sense of a social duty obliging him to convey a message; and if so, when is the "message" beneficial and when detrimental to the "art"?

I believe that the man of letters at the present day ought to have this sense. But the great danger for the artist is always that of conscientiously trying to feel what he does not feel. I will venture the following formulation: What is desirable is a harmony between the individual and sub-individual passions of the artist, and the social ideas and feelings which he wishes to propagate. In this harmony, he neither exploits the conscious doctrine as a vehicle for his personality, nor cramps or distorts his personality to adapt it to a social doctrine. This requires some little amplification.

A man is both an individual and a member. Instead of "individual" I shall use the word "person." His *personality* is unique and not to be violated; but he is equally created to be a *member* of society. When society is conceived as merely a sum of individuals, you get the chaos of liberal democracy. When the person is wholly subordinated to society, you get the dehumanization of fascism or communism. The extremes, however, may meet. For what liberal democracy really recognizes is a sum, not of persons, but of individuals: that is to say, not the variety and uniqueness of persons, but the purely material individuation of the old-fashioned or Democritean atom.[7] And this is a disrespect to the person. For the person is no longer a person if wholly isolated from community; and the community is no longer a community if it does not consist of persons. A man is not himself unless he is a member; and he cannot be a member unless he is also something alone. Man's membership and his solitude must be taken together. There are moments, perhaps not known to everyone, when a man may be nearly crushed by the terrible awareness of his isolation from every other human being; and I pity him if he finds himself only alone with himself and his meanness and futility, alone without God. It is after these moments, alone *with* God and aware of our worthiness, but for Grace, of nothing but

damnation, that we turn with most thankfulness and appreciation to the awareness of our *membership*: for we appreciate and are thankful for nothing fully until we see where it begins and where it ends. All that I have been saying is recognized by the Church, and the balance is maintained only by the Church: it is not recognized, but is made manifest by, the endless seesaw of political tendency between anarchy and tyranny: a seesaw which, in the secular world, I believe has no end.

Now all this may sound perfectly irrelevant to my subject; but it is not so. This same balance ought to exist, on its plane, in the activity of the artist. For the artist cannot devote himself truly to any cause unless by that devotion he is also most truly being, and becoming, himself. The artist may, as Remy de Gourmont profoundly says, "in writing himself, write his age"; but I think that we should add that he may sometimes in writing his age, write himself: which will come to the same thing.[8] But it is from himself that he must start. It is sometimes helpful to put things in an extreme, and therefore dangerous way. So I may say that in one aspect the true artist may be said to be simply *exploiting* the things he believes in for the purpose of making art – only if he does this *consciously* is he a false artist.

Whereas a man like D. H. Lawrence is in danger of manipulating his philosophy to fit his private needs and to justify his private weaknesses, the adherent of an objective creed is in danger of denying, or distorting himself to fit his beliefs; and the opposite insincerity becomes possible. This is equally a danger for the Christian and for the communist, and especially at those moments when personal inspiration fails. How far can one go in identifying a creed with oneself, or oneself with a creed? The development of the person may be twisted, or the purity of the creed may be polluted. I believe, naturally, that the Christian, if he understands his Christianity, has safeguards which the mere social revolutionist cannot have: safeguards of the personal emotion. For instance: social enthusiasm alone, however intense, does not seem to have the substance needed to make poetry. What is the difference between Dante's denunciation of the vices of his time, and Shelley's denunciation of kings, tyrants and priests?[9] Shelley's excitement is in his head, and therefore emits rather shrill and inapplicable head noises; whereas Dante's is involved with all his own sufferings – definite grievances and definite humiliations at the hands of particular people, of all of which he is conscious: self-interested grudges and deprivations, earthly if you like, but primarily *real*, and that is the first thing. Only the greatest, the Hebrew Prophets, seem to be utterly caught up and possessed by God as

mouthpieces; in ordinary human poets the human personal loss, the private grievance and bitterness and loneliness, must be present. Even when the poet is aware of nothing, interested in nothing, beyond his personal feelings, these may have, by their intensity, a representative value, so that we envisage him, like Villon, not as wrapped up in his private griefs, but relieving them, holding nothing back, in a passionate cry to God – and there is, in the end, no one else to cry to. But in the greatest poets these private passions are completed in a passionate belief in objective moral values, in a striving towards justice and the life of the spirit among men.[10]

Now the tendency of secular revolution to-day seems to me to be to diminish the value of the person. Of what importance, we may say currently, is all this expression of personal feeling and private suffering, in a world of so much general injustice and oppression? and this is the secular point of view: of what importance one man, when the life of society is at stake! We are back with the modern eschatology of which Mr. Wells is the popular preacher. The present order is damned, let us snatch what satisfaction we can, say some; and, the present order is damned, let us sacrifice – not our pleasure, but our *selves* – to the future, say others; and one may perhaps maintain both conclusions at once. And behind is the master idea which has been working unobtrusively throughout our time, an idea which in the forms of heresy has always been waiting for us: the idea of the "*group consciousness*" – modest, and scientific and certain it sounds under that name.[11]

In a recent article called "The Real Issue," which I have read with interest and approval, Mr. Christopher Dawson makes some pertinent remarks about the position of the individual in the classless society:

> . . . the orthodox Communist will deny that this total subordination and sacrifice of humanity to the State machine is of the essence of Communism, for did not Marx and Lenin expressly teach that the dictatorship of the proletariat is only a temporary phase, and that the State itself will eventually wither away and give place to a classless and Stateless society? But how will this end be attained? Only when the individual is so completely socialized that he will instinctively devote all his energies to working for society and will be unable to conceive of any other end than that of the economic organism of which he forms part. In such an order there will be no need for a State any more than it is necessary for ants or bees to have a State. But is it a human order, and is it possible for humanity to rise or sink to such a level?[12]

I do not, any more than Mr. Dawson, think such a consummation likely; but if I did not think it possible I should not take the trouble of attacking the idea of it. It would be brought about, not by the diabolic cleverness of scheming philosophers and politicians, but by the natural aversion of human beings to the responsibility and strain of being *human*. For we must remember that it *is* a great strain for the erect animal to persist in being erect, a physical and still more a moral strain. With or without mechanical aids of movement and noise, most people spend a good deal of their time avoiding the human responsibility; and we only remain human because of the continual vicarious sacrifice of a few dedicated lives. And the "group consciousness," the heresy bred within the antithetical heresy of liberalism, has a great seductive charm; for it helps to release us from the burden of responsibility. It would more likely, I think, be a reversion to a lower kind of consciousness, than an ascent to a higher one; it is largely, in fact, to the speculations, which profess to be based on the study of primitive races, of such writers as Durkheim and Lévy-Bruhl, that we owe the conceptions. That such a state of humanity would be unfavourable to poetry follows from what I have said earlier. That is not perhaps of the utmost importance in itself; there are matters more important than the perpetual production of new poetry, though we must remember that a people which ceases to create the new will also lose the power to appreciate the *old*. What is important is that the creation of poetry depends upon the maintenance of the person, of the person in relation to other individuals, to God, and to society.

There is much, however, in the aspirations of poetry to-day with which I am in full sympathy. When we compare the state of poetry now with that of forty years ago, towards the end of the last century, I think we may see, without drawing any comparison between the merits of individual poets (and even if that comparison were to result to our disadvantage), that the social earnestness and dissatisfaction which have been lately expressing themselves have been all to the good; and poetry has taken on a new seriousness and a new social importance. It is perhaps not insignificant that the one great poet we have who belongs to both periods, Mr. William Butler Yeats, has been writing his finest poetry within recent years. With all we owe him, I find it difficult to regard Mr. Yeats as anything but a *contemporary*; and if anyone said that of me, when I arrive at his present age, I should consider it the highest of compliments. What I think we have missed, and have been struggling for, is the recognition of poetry as something other

than exquisite pleasure for a small number of people who have the taste for it – as something having a function of social value. The poet must assume his role of moralist, and thus manifest his relation to society.

I think however that the passion for social righteousness will prove in the end not enough in itself. The danger of what I have called the modern eschatology, the danger of neglecting the permanent for the transitory, the personal for the social, is one to which the poet is exposed in common with everyone else: but he has a peculiar responsibility not to be deluded. Yet I would ask you to have some sympathy with his difficulties. An age of change, and a period of incessant apprehension of war, do not form a favourable environment. There is a temptation to welcome change for its own sake, to sink our minds in some desperate philosophy of *action*; and several such philosophies are being urged upon us. Contempt for the past, and even ignorance of it, is on the increase, and many are ready for the unlimited experiment. We cannot effect intelligent change, unless we hold fast to the permanent essentials; and a clear understanding of what we should hold fast to, and what abandon, should make us all the better prepared to carry out the changes that are needed. Thus we can look back upon the past without regret, and to the future without fear.

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. The triannual (Feb, May, Oct) *Teaching Church Review* was edited by the Rev. Cyril E. Hudson (1888-1960), Canon of St. Albans and Honorable Secretary of the Teaching Church Group for Adult Religious Education. Having met TSE at meetings of the Literature Committee of the English Church Union, Hudson asked him in May 1932 for a contribution, which TSE promised after his return from America and confirmed in Jan 1934. Explaining that he could not begin before midsummer, TSE later decided to withhold the essay in order to deliver a longer version as autumn lectures at the University of Leeds on 11 Oct at the invitation of F. P. Wilson and at University College, Hull on 16 Nov at the invitation of Sherard Vines. "Or there is a subject chosen for Leeds (not yet written)," he wrote to Vines on 10 July, "on 'Literature in the Modern World' (or something like that), which would touch on some of the points raised in 'After Strange Gods.'" He submitted this shortened version to Hudson on 4 Dec.

This previously unrecorded publication has been known only through its reprinting in *American Prefaces: A Journal of Critical and Imaginative Writing*, ed. William Schramm and Norman Foerster, at the University of Iowa in Nov 1935 (Gallup C395). When Foerster reminded TSE of his promised contribution, TSE wrote in Feb 1935 that he was too busy to write something new, enclosing this essay: "I must, therefore, send you something which has served other purposes . . . you will see that it has not had any great publicity in this country, and if you care for it, you are welcome to it." Foerster replied that the editors "are delighted indeed to have something from you, and so good a thing. It will be suitable in every way."

2. In his Fison Memorial Lecture *Science and the Ultimate Truth* (London: Longmans, Green, 1926), Dean Inge wrote: "Let us hope, by all means, for some amelioration in the human lot in the near future; but let us not forget two indubitable facts – first, that there is no law of progress; we must work out our own salvation" (20).

3. Tennyson expressed his belief in the inevitability of human progress in "Locksley Hall" (1842): "Not in vain the distance beacons. Forward, forward let us range, / Let the great world spin for ever down the ringing grooves of change" (ll. 181-82).

4. Under the influence of Thomas Henry Huxley and Darwinian natural selection, Wells came to see evolution as the key to understanding not only the origin of species but also the progressive development of human life and society. TSE evidently refers to Wells's statement in the first chapter of *The War of the Worlds* (London: Heinemann, 1898): "And we men, the creatures who inhabit this earth, must be to them [the Martians] at least as alien and lowly as are the monkeys and lemurs to us" (4). In *The Outline of History: Being a Plain History of Life and Mankind* (1920), in which he adds pigs, tapirs, opossums, and other creatures, Wells presents history as an inexorable cultural evolution leading to the abandonment of authoritarian religious and political systems in favor of a world state founded on scientific knowledge. In "Popular Theologians" (1927) (3.63), TSE reviewed Hilaire Belloc's sequence of attacks on Wells's evolutionary views, including Wells's response in *Mr. Belloc Objects to "The Outline of History"* (London: Watts, 1926), in which Wells reiterates his belief that "we can realise now . . . that man is a creature changing very rapidly from the life of a rare and solitary great ape to the life of a social and economic animal" (53).

5. The Gospel of Luke relates what is sometimes referred to as the Parable of the Rich Fool. A rich man tears down his buildings and erects larger barns in which to store his overabundant harvest, saying to himself: "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry." But God responds: "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?" Luke 12: 15-21 (KJV).

6. TSE alludes to the *Gloria Patri*, a doxology praising God and affirming faith in the Holy Trinity: "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen."

7. The Greek philosopher Democritus developed the idea of atoms on the premise that matter could not be divided into smaller and smaller pieces forever; eventually the smallest indivisible piece would be obtained, which he named "atomos," meaning "not to be cut." According to Democritus, there was an infinite number of atoms, which were in constant motion and capable of forming connections.

8. "Il n'y a de livres que ceux où un écrivain s'est raconté lui-même en racontant les mœurs de ses contemporains, leurs rêves, leurs vanités, leurs amours et leurs folies." *Le Problème du style* (Paris: Mercure de France, 1902, 105). *Trans*: "The only books are those where a writer has related himself by relating the morals of his contemporaries, their dreams, their vanities, their loves and their follies." Trans. Richard Aldington, *Remy de Gourmont: Selections from All his Works*, vol 2 (Chicago: P. Covici, 1928), 428. TSE also quoted this statement in "Shakespeare and the Stoicism of Seneca" (1927) (3.254 n.42*).

9. "From kings and priests and statesmen war arose, / Whose safety is man's deep unbettered woe, / Whose grandeur his debasement" (*Queen Mab* IV.80-82).

10. TSE wrote in "Modern Tendencies in Poetry" (1920): "What constitutes the terrible authenticity of Villon's testaments is that he *saw* his feelings, watched them, as coldly as an astronomer watches a comet; and without this cold and scientific observation he could never have given his feelings their permanent intensity" (2.214-15). And he argued in *After Strange Gods* that "Hopkins is not a religious poet in the more important sense in which I have elsewhere maintained Baudelaire to be a religious poet; or in the sense in which I find Villon to be a religious poet" (5.37).

11. See TSE's discussion of Durkheim's "well-known theory of the group consciousness" in his second review of *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* (1.670). In his Jan 1935 "Commentary," TSE also notes with approval the "examination of the implications of the *âme collective*" in *Demain la France* (5.150).

12. Dawson's essay appeared in *The Colosseum*, 1 (Sept 1934), 17-31; here 23. He incorporated the essay as "The Conflict between Christianity and Marxism" in his *Religion and the Modern State* (1935).

T. S. Eliot's Notes on the Way [II]

To the Editor of *Time and Tide*

Time and Tide, 16 (2 Feb 1935) 154-55

Sir, – I have to thank you yet a third time for giving Miss Rebecca West the hospitality of your columns.[1] But this time I am not so thankful to Miss West, since she has said something to which I must reply. She says that my phrases "seek to suggest" that she has not read the works of Father Thurston. I never dreamt of such a thing: I only sought to suggest that perhaps Miss West had read them without quite understanding them.

I am inclined to believe that my suspicions have some foundation. Miss West says that I remark in dispraise of Mr. Huxley's interest in psychical phenomena that it would be of no importance whether psychical phenomena were established or not, and she says that Fr. Thurston is evidently not of the same opinion. Well; the effect of Fr. Thurston's writings on my mind is to persuade me that psychical phenomena are *not* important; and I should have thought that that was what he intended. But I do not know Fr. Thurston, and Miss West has interviewed him.[2] I have it from a mutual friend that Fr. Thurston has never attended a *séance*; perhaps Fr. Thurston did not have time to tell Miss West that.[3] One's imagination runs riot (to use the kind of phrase that flows from Miss West's pen under inspiration and circumstances of unusual difficulty)[4] in wondering what *was* said at that interview. Did Miss West, I wonder, tell Fr. Thurston that he was a "most charming and contented ornament of the Church"?[5]

As for my own honesty, which Miss West does not seem to think highly of, I leave that for others to judge. In her first epistle, Miss West suggested that, after saying that "It is better to suspend decision than to surrender oneself to a belief merely for the sake of believing something," I ought to dissociate myself from the doctrine of Charles Maurras and all the Action Française group, who "blatantly recommend that France should practise Catholicism whether she believed it or not, for the sake of the unifying power of a religion."[6] Miss West did not pause to point out that to surrender oneself to a belief for the sake of believing something, is not the same thing as practising a religion without believing it; nor did she entertain the possibility that I supported Maurras and the Action Française group for

some other reasons than what she calls their "blatant recommendation." But perhaps I am asking too much of human honesty, especially in the warmth of controversy. If Miss West would come up and see me some time, I should enjoy talking these matters over quietly.[7]

I should like to dissociate myself from the "Eliot legend" which Miss West (still writing, I suppose, under circumstances of unusual difficulty) accuses me of "gratuitously" trying to "bolster up."[8] As for the "powerful flood of suggestion that has been turned on us in England during the last twenty years,"[9] I admire Miss West as a sort of Mount Ararat, the first to rear her majestic head from the subsiding waters.[10] But perhaps Miss West was never submerged at all; in which case I admire her still more as "that most charming and contented ornament" of the Ark, Mrs. Noah.

I am, etc.,

T. S. ELIOT

24 RUSSELL SQUARE, W. C. 1

P. S.– I again call your attention to the misprint *voleuntade* for *volontate*, repeated in Miss West's quotation which I mentioned in the footnote, which you did not print, to my last letter.

NOTES

1. The opening echoes that of Rebecca West's letters printed in the issues of 19 Jan, "Sir, – I have to thank you yet again for having asked Mr. T. S. Eliot to contribute 'Notes on the Way' during the past week" (94) and of 26 Jan, to which this is a rejoinder: "Sir, – I have to thank you yet a third time for having asked Mr. T. S. Eliot to contribute 'Notes on the Way' during the present month" (123).

2. When protesting her knowledge of Father Thurston's works, West stated: "I have met Father Thurston for the purpose of discussing their contents" (123).

3. The mutual friend is likely to be Hope Mirrlees, as TSE wrote to her on 28 Jan 1935: "I should be delighted to come to meet Father Thurston, but Thursday, unfortunately, is engaged. The only day I could manage this week is Saturday."

4. West had written in postscript at the end of her letter: "As my letter last week was written under circumstances of unusual difficulty, my handwriting developed a peculiar illegibility. Hence, 'cadle' for 'cadre' and the shocking error of 'lithographed' for 'engraved'" (124).

5. When contrasting Aldous Huxley's and Father Thurston's interest in "supernatural manifestations," West wrote of the latter: "It is obvious that any train of thought would take very different forms in that most charming and contented ornament of the Church" (123).

6. *Time and Tide*, 12 Jan 1935, 44.

7. Playing on Rebecca West's name, TSE quotes the famous line of the Hollywood star Mae West – "Why don't you come up sometime and see me?" – from *She Done Him Wrong* (1933), a line that she repeated with variations in subsequent movies and appearances.

8. "It is a purely gratuitous attempt to bolster up the Eliot legend of the Great White Literary Spirit who, all-wise and happy in having read not only all the books that have been written, but that are going to be written, broods in solitary grieved majesty over a literary world, the only other inhabitants of which are barely literate, imbecile, and wholly unacquainted with literature, though they may have once seen a book by Ethel Mannin" (123).

9. West concluded her letter by quoting a passage from TSE's "Notes on the Way [III]" of 19 Jan and commenting: "The complete lack of logical connection between these sentences would evoke unfavourable comment from any literature teacher. But he or she would not have been exposed to the powerful flood of suggestion that has been turned on us in England during the last twenty years" (124).

10. According to the Bible, Noah's Ark landed on the mountains of Ararat, situated in present-day Turkey, after the great flood (Genesis 8:4).

Mr. Milne and War [II][1]

To the Editor of *Time and Tide*

Time and Tide, 16 (9 Feb 1935) 191

Sir, – As Mr. Milne continues to involve himself, like a cat in fly-paper, in comparisons or analogies which he cannot control; as he is impervious to irony; and as he consistently misses the point, I shall content myself with re-stating briefly what I meant the main point to be.[2]

I did not criticise Mr. Milne's book from pure love of destruction, but from a belief that essays like his are harmful in so far as they distract people's minds from more practical effort to minimise the chances of war. I pointed out that, instead of inveighing against War in general, we should do better to study the causes of the particular kind of war which we should be likely to have in contemporary circumstances. I believe the causes of modern wars to be largely, even preponderantly, economic; and I suggested that we ought to try to modify the world economy, beginning with our own, in order to do away, for instance, with the "struggle for markets." The ultimate cause of War may indeed reside in human passions; but these passions operate through a long series of interests. I think that the passion for fighting and the motive of hatred are quite secondary among the causes of modern war. If Mr. Milne, like Lady Rhondda, is quite satisfied by Mr. Huxley's intelligent but superficial reflexions on the conflicts of Central America, there is no more to be said.[3]

Mr. Milne says, in rejoinder to Miss Mary Butts:[4] "There is not one single page in my book which indicates whether I do or do not believe in individual immortality." This is a very significant omission; and I am glad that Mr. Milne has called attention to it. The fact that Mr. Milne does not realise its significance only makes it more significant.

I am grateful to Mr. Edwards for correcting me; I could not remember how *Palice* was spelt. I was indeed referring to the *vérité de la Palice* rather than to the gallant officer, of whose death I had heard. I must call Mr. Edwards' attention, however, to the difference between a *truism* and a *tautology*.[5]

I am, etc.,

T. S. ELIOT

24 RUSSELL SQUARE, W.C. 1

NOTES

1. The CC is dated 3 Feb.

2. Milne's rejoinder to TSE's letter of 26 Jan 1935 (5.182) appeared in the issue of 2 Feb (154).

3. The Welsh suffragette Margaret Haig Mackworth, Viscountess Rhondda (1883-1958), who was contributing "Notes on the Way" in Feb 1935, praises in her first installment Aldous Huxley's "analysis of the pleasure of national hatred, which is the best thing of its kind I have yet read (he and Heaven alone know why he has entitled it 'Guatemala City' and embedded it in the middle of travel notes in *Beyond the Mexique Bay*)" (*Time and Tide*, 2 Feb 1935, 150).

4. In a letter to Leonard P. More of 20 July 1934, TSE wrote that he had "always been interested" in the work of Mary Butts (1890-1937), who wrote a letter expressing her "agreement with Mr. T. S. Eliot" in the issue of 26 Jan (124).

5. F. M. Edwards wrote: "I did not even know that Monsieur de la Palisse had been ill, but perhaps Mr. Eliot means le Seigneur de la Palice, who is certainly dead, for he fell at Pavia in 1532. His soldiers sang of him: / *un quart d'heure avant sa mort* / *il était encore en vie* [fifteen minutes before his death, he was still quite alive] by which they meant that he was fighting until just before his death. In later times these words were not so understood, and so *une vérité de La Palice* came to mean a truism. But the Seigneur is killed (and dead) and certainly was not himself, as Mr. Eliot seems to think, an exponent of the obvious" (156).

Douglas in the Church Assembly

To the Editor of *The New English Weekly*

The New English Weekly, 6 (14 Feb 1935) 382-83

Sir, – While I feel, as I suppose do other readers of the *New English Weekly*, gratified that some members of the Commission appointed to report to the Church Assembly on the subject of Unemployment, were able to incorporate into the Recommendations such excellent and far-reaching suggestions; and while I am gratified also that the Assembly has "accepted" (whatever that means) the Report, I cannot feel any happier after reading the report of the discussions of the Report in the Assembly.[1] So far as the Church Assembly, or its vocal members, may be taken to speak for "The Church," it would appear that the Church has not made up its mind how far, or in what way, it ought to be concerned with social and economic problems. And until the Church does make up its mind, I do not see that we have much reason either to rejoice that Credit Reform proposals should be debated, or to deplore that they have met with such vague approval.

What is evident to a reader of the proceedings,[2] is that each speaker spoke according to the warmth of his heart, and in the light of his individual reason. Those who, as individual subjects, believed that Reform was necessary, advocated it; those who individually believed that it was all nonsense, concluded that the Church ought not to meddle with economics at all: and many persons, both in and out of the Church Assembly, are probably deterred by the fear of letting the Church back the wrong horse. The more enlightened, such as the Bishop of London and the Bishop of Southwark, made it clear enough that they did not wish the Church to commit itself to any particular theory of reform, but that they would like to see the Church commit itself to the assertion that the present situation is intolerable and unreasonable, and that it devolved upon the temporal authorities to recognise the present situation for what it is and do something about it.[3] That is a perfectly sensible position to take up; indeed it is, in my opinion, about as far as the Church (again, in so far as the Church Assembly can be said to represent the Church) can go. But the debate seems to have resolved itself into a conflict of individual opinions as to the merit of the "Douglas Plan."[4] It was perfectly clear that no one who took

part had thought out for himself what *are* the relations of Church and State: so how could they be qualified to discuss the Report? The one attempt, and a lamentable failure it seems to have been, to say what is and is not the Church's business, came from the Bishop of Jarrow, who remarked neatly that "it was not the business of the Church to make society fit for men, but to make men fit for society."[5] To employ the Bishop's own turn of speech, we may suggest that if we are respectful enough to believe that this statement has meaning, then it is heretical; and that if we are respectful enough not to question its orthodoxy, we must admit that it is meaningless.

I suggest that we should be more likely to get somewhere if the representatives of the Church in the Church Assembly, instead of merely expounding their own economic beliefs or prejudices – and the opinion expressed against the Douglas Theory was merely a prejudice expressed in favour of the present system, not a demarcation of the limits to which the Church should go in favouring any temporal system – should give their time to considering the fundamental moral laws founded on Christian theology, and content themselves with proclaiming positively any violations of these laws which they observe (as Churchmen) in the present order. If the voice of the Church spoke with authority on that point, the result would be disturbing enough: more disturbing, and more hopeful, than anything that has been accomplished by the present Church Assembly.

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. As reported in the 7 Feb issue of the *NEW*, the Church Assembly discussed the report of the Social and Industrial Commission on Unemployment at its two-day spring session (347-48). But TSE draws primarily on the more detailed reports printed in the *Times* of 7 and 8 Feb. In "Church Assembly: The Unemployment Report," it is stated that "the motion that the report be received was carried unanimously," and Sir Montague Barlow is quoted as saying that "every one in the Assembly agreed that they accepted freely the spirit in which the report had been drafted" (8 Feb 1935, 16).

2. See *Church Assembly: Interim Report of the Social and Industrial Commission on Unemployment* (Westminster: J. B. Nichols & Sons, 1935), 24. TSE does not quote from this committee report.

3. The Bishop of London, Arthur Winnington-Ingram (1858-1946), said: "This Assembly is convinced that it is the duty of Christian people to study seriously the underlying causes of unemployment, with a view to their removal: and to use their influence to create a strong public opinion which will demand that financial, industrial, and economic policy be so reconstructed as to express more adequately the moral and religious principles which are the only sure

foundations of social order" (8 Feb 1935, 16). The Bishop of Southwark, Richard Parsons (1882-1948), stated that "the report did not aim at securing the assent of the Assembly to any one proposal for such elimination [of unemployment]" ("Church and the Unemployed," 7 Feb 1935, 9).

4. The MP for Rushcliffe Ralph Assheton (1901-84), for example, pointed out that Major Douglas's theory "had been rejected by all economists of repute of every school of thought" (7 Feb 1935, 9). The Douglas Plan was also criticized by Sir Montague Barlow (8 Feb 1935, 16).

5. The Bishop of Jarrow, James Geoffrey Gordon (1881-1938), "urged very strongly . . . that it was not the business of the Assembly and the Church to be concerned with economic remedies and reconstruction policies. It was not the Church's business to make society fit for man, but to make man fit for society" (7 Feb 1935, 9).

T. S. Eliot's Notes on the Way [III]

To the Editor of *Time and Tide*

Time and Tide, 16 (23 Feb 1935) 272

Sir, – Mr. Milne has begun to formulate the differences between him and myself. He believes that it is "simpler" to stop war than to stop conflicts between nations;[1] I believe that there is more hope of preventing the causes of conflict than of stopping war so long as the conflicts continue. That is one point; and Mr. Milne and I hold contradictory views. Second, Mr. Milne and I dislike war for different reasons: I adopt an explicitly Christian view, and Mr. Milne is explicitly non-committal. Third, Mr. Milne believes that analogies from conflicts between individuals prove something about conflicts between nations; and I do not.[2]

I am, etc.,

T. S. ELIOT

24 RUSSELL SQUARE, W.C.1

NOTES

1. A. A. Milne wrote in his letter printed in the 16 Feb issue of *Time and Tide*: "I believe that it is simpler to break the sequence from 'conflict' to 'war' than to break the sequence from 'cause' to 'conflict' or to eliminate all possible causes of conflict" (238).

2. Milne continues: "Just as . . . our ancestors found it simpler to break the sequence from 'quarrel' to 'duel' than to break the sequence from 'cause' to 'quarrel,' or to eliminate all possible causes of quarrel" (238).

The Church Assembly and Social Credit

To the Editor of *The New English Weekly*

The New English Weekly, 6 (28 Feb 1935) 422

Sir, – I hope and believe that the difference between myself and Mr. Maurice Reckitt is more verbal than real. I assumed, even if I did not make explicit, the difference between the Report of the Commission and the debate on the Report in the Assembly.[1] I was not finding fault with the Report, but with the debate.[2] When I wrote, my feelings were inflamed by the words of Lord Hugh Cecil, Mr. Assheton, Sir Francis Fremantle, and the Bishop of Jarrow.[3]

I should like to draw a distinction between the use of the terms "the Church" and "Churchmen." I indicated a point beyond which I thought that "the Church" should not go; but I should think poorly of Churchmen, as human beings, if they were unwilling to go farther: I might even say that it seems to me to be the duty of Churchmen to go farther than the Church should go. When Mr. Reckitt says that he does not think that Churchmen are justified "in associating religion categorically with any particular secular theory," I am in agreement, except that instead of the term "religion," which I do not much like, I should prefer "the Faith." But I should add that I feel that Churchmen, as individuals, might well advocate whatever secular theory seems to them most nearly compatible with their Churchmanship. By all means let Churchmen "draw constructive deductions from their premises": Mr. Reckitt does that, and so, I hope, do I. In so doing, we commit no one but ourselves. It is not the business of the Church to commit itself to any particular secular solution; but it is very much the business of individual Churchmen, as they take their membership of the Church seriously, to be ready to commit their individual opinions.

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. Established by Parliament in 1919, the Church Assembly Act provided for an Ecclesiastical Committee, consisting of fifteen members from the House of Lords and fifteen members from the House of Commons chosen by the Speaker of the respective House and appointed only for the duration of each parliament. This committee was granted the authority to determine and express the Church's mind on a range of issues.

2. In response to TSE's letter of 14 Feb (5.210), Maurice Reckitt, who was a member of the Church Assembly's Social and Industrial Commission, wrote in the 21 Feb issue of the *NEW*: "I would like . . . to draw a distinction between the debate on the Report and the Report itself" (403).

3. For the comments by Mr. Assheton and the Bishop of Jarrow, see the issue of 14 Feb (5.212 nn. 4, 5). Lord Hugh Cecil and Sir Francis Fremantle (1872-1943), Conservative MP for St. Albans and member of the Commission, both criticized the report. The former "said the report was not illuminating, and failed to serve its purpose," while Fremantle claimed that it "was likely to unsettle people rather than to help them. He wanted it buried in the archives of the Assembly" (*The Times*, 7 Feb 1935, 9).

The Church and Society

To the Editor of *The New English Weekly*

The New English Weekly, 6 (21 Mar 1935) 482

Sir, – In replying to Fr. Demant's letter in your issue of March 7th, I have had still more difficulty than in replying to Mr. Reckitt, to decide what the points of difference are.[1]

I did not speak of the obligation of the Church to "pass beyond" saying that the state of things is bad, to saying *why* it is bad, because I assumed that the Church should know why it is bad before saying that it *is* bad. But *Why* may mean several different answers: here, I suppose, we mean the reason why the state of things controverts Christian faith and practice. The answer to the *Why* is not quite the same for the Christian and the non-Christian.

"The Church fails socially because she fails theologically" [443], says Fr. Demant. With that I wholly agree. If I and another Churchman advocate the same economic changes, but disagree in our theology, then our agreement is as ordinary citizens and not as Churchmen. I do not want to say with any Churchman: "let us sink our theological differences, and unite on a social policy" *as Churchmen*.

What I find difficult to understand is Fr. Demant's distinction between "the nature of the re-ordering of society which will remove the evil" – with which he thinks the Church should occupy itself – and prescribing "the political or economic means for that re-ordering." I should be glad if he would make clear the difference between the *nature of the re-ordering* and the *political or economic means for that re-ordering*. Until he does that, until we agree as to what are ends and what are means, I shall not know whether we disagree or not.

I should think that it was quite within the scope of the Church's business to give us a definition of *work* and *leisure*; and certainly to have an opinion between collectivism and distributism, the latter in view of the confusion between *ownership*, *control*, and *title to interest*.[2] One might also wish that the Church might be more positive even in its negative pronouncements. It sometimes seems as if the Church was opposed to Communism, only because Communism is opposed to the Church. I have at hand a book containing statements by Sir Oswald Mosley, which anyone

with the merest smattering of theology can recognise to be not only puerile but anathema.[3] So far as I know, the Church has given no direction to the Faithful in response to these statements.

But I should like to qualify Fr. Demant's statement that "Sir Francis Fremantle . . . is representative of the Church in her official congresses" [443] by suggesting that the Church is not really represented by her official congresses – or at least by the Church Assembly. Fr. Demant knows as well as I do how the Church Assembly is recruited.[4]

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. V. A. Demant's letter is printed under the title "How Far Can the Church Go?," *NEW*, 7 Mar 1935, 442-43. TSE wrote to him on 8 Mar: "I have not thoroughly taken in your letter to *The New English Weekly* yet, but I shall try to produce some answer in next week's issue."

2. Demant argued: "The Church should know which way out of the evils of Capitalism she is going to encourage, collectivism or distributed property" (442).

3. Possibly James Drennan's *B.U.F.: Oswald Mosley and British Fascism* (London: John Murray, 1934), which reproduced large portions of Mosley's speeches. See "Religion and Literature" (5.227 n.18) for TSE's critique of Mosley's ideas.

4. Although the Church Assembly Committee was granted the authority to determine and express the Church's mind on a range of issues (5.214 n.1), there was no requirement that the members be regular communicants of the Church of England or any other faith or that they have any theological training. Some of the fifteen members from the House of Lords might be bishops; most of the fifteen members from the House of Commons would be laity.

Religion and Literature[1]

What I have to say is largely in support of the following propositions: Literary criticism should be completed by criticism from a definite ethical and theological standpoint. In so far as in any age there is common agreement on ethical and theological matters, so far can literary criticism be substantive. In ages like our own, in which there is no such common agreement, it is the more necessary for Christian readers to scrutinize their reading, especially of works of imagination, with explicit ethical and theological standards. The "greatness" of literature cannot be determined solely by literary standards; though we must remember that whether it is literature or not can be determined only by literary standards.[2*]

We have tacitly assumed, for some centuries past, that there is *no* relation between literature and theology. This is not to deny that literature – I mean, again, primarily works of imagination – has been, is, and probably always will be judged by some moral standards. But moral judgements of literary works are made only according to the moral code accepted by each generation, whether it lives according to that code or not. In an age which accepts some precise Christian theology, the common code may be fairly orthodox: though even in such periods the common code may exalt such concepts as "honour," "glory" or "revenge" to a position quite intolerable to Christianity. The dramatic ethics of the Elizabethan Age offers an interesting study. But when the common code is detached from its theological background, and is consequently more and more merely a matter of habit, it is exposed both to prejudice and to change. At such times morals are open to being altered *by* literature; so that we find in practice that what is "objectionable" in literature is merely what the present generation is not used to. It is a commonplace that what shocks one generation is accepted quite calmly by the next. This adaptability to change of moral standards is sometimes greeted with satisfaction as an evidence of human perfectability: whereas it is only evidence of what unsubstantial foundations people's moral judgements have.

I am not concerned here with religious literature but with the application of our religion to the criticism of any literature. It may be as well, however, to distinguish first what I consider to be the three senses in which we

can speak of "religious literature." The first is that of which we say that it is religious "literature" in the same way that we speak of "historical literature" or of "scientific literature." I mean that we can treat the Authorized translation of the Bible, or the works of Jeremy Taylor, as literature, in the same way that we treat the historical writing of Clarendon or of Gibbon – our two great English historians – as literature; or Bradley's *Logic*, or Buffon's *Natural History*.[3] All of these writers were men who, incidentally to their religious, or historical, or philosophic purpose, had a gift of language which makes them delightful to read to all those who can enjoy language well written, even if they are unconcerned with the objects which the writers had in view. And I would add that though a scientific, or historical, or theological, or philosophic work which is also "literature," may become superannuated as anything but literature, yet it is not likely to be "literature" unless it had its scientific or other value for its own time. While I acknowledge the legitimacy of this enjoyment, I am more acutely aware of its abuse. The persons who enjoy these writings *solely* because of their literary merit are essentially parasites; and we know that parasites, when they become too numerous, are pests. I could fulminate[4†] against the men of letters who have gone into ecstasies over "the Bible as literature," the Bible as "the noblest monument of English prose."[5] Those who talk of the Bible as a "monument of English prose" are merely admiring it as a monument over the grave of Christianity. I must try to avoid the by-paths of my discourse: it is enough to suggest that just as the work of Clarendon, or Gibbon, or Buffon, or Bradley would be of inferior literary value if it were insignificant as history, science and philosophy respectively, so the Bible has had a *literary* influence upon English literature *not* because it has been considered as literature, but because it has been considered as the report of the Word of God. And the fact that men of letters now discuss it as "literature" probably indicates the *end* of its "literary" influence.

The second kind of relation of religion to literature is that which is found in what is called "religious" or "devotional" poetry. Now what is the usual attitude of the lover of poetry – and I mean the person who is a genuine and first-hand enjoyer and appreciator of poetry, not the person who follows the admirations of others – towards this department of poetry? I believe, all that may be implied in his calling it a *department*. He believes, not always explicitly, that when you qualify poetry as "religious" you are indicating very clear limitations. For the great majority of people who love poetry, "*religious* poetry" is a variety of *minor* poetry: the religious poet is

not a poet who is treating the whole subject matter of poetry in a religious spirit, but a poet who is dealing with a confined part of this subject matter; who is leaving out what men consider their major passions, and thereby confessing his ignorance of them.[6] I think that this is the real attitude of most poetry lovers towards such poets as Vaughan, or Southwell, or Crashaw, or George Herbert, or Gerard Hopkins.

But what is more, I am ready to admit that up to a point these critics are right. For there is a kind of poetry, such as most of the work of the authors I have mentioned, which is the product of a special religious awareness, which may exist without the general awareness which we expect of the major poet. In some poets, or in some of their works, this general awareness may have existed; but the preliminary steps which represent it may have been suppressed, and only the end-product presented. Between these, and those in which the religious or devotional genius represents the *special* and limited awareness, it may be very difficult to discriminate. I do not pretend to offer Vaughan, or Southwell, or George Herbert, or Hopkins as major poets:[7]* I feel sure that the first three, at least, are poets of this limited awareness. They are not great religious poets in the sense in which Dante, or Corneille, or Racine, even in those of their plays which do not touch upon Christian themes, are great Christian religious poets. Or even in the sense in which Villon and Baudelaire, with all their imperfections and delinquencies, are Christian poets. Since the time of Chaucer, Christian poetry (in the sense in which I shall mean it) has been limited in England almost exclusively to minor poetry.

I repeat that when I am considering Religion and Literature, I speak of these things only to make clear that I am not concerned primarily with Religious Literature. I am concerned with what should be the relation between Religion and all Literature. Therefore the third type of "religious literature" may be more quickly passed over. I mean the literary works of men who are sincerely desirous of forwarding the cause of religion: that which may come under the heading of Propaganda. I am thinking, of course, of such delightful fiction as Mr. Chesterton's *Man Who Was Thursday*, or his *Father Brown*.[8] No one admires and enjoys these things more than I do; I would only remark that when the same effect is aimed at by zealous persons of less talent than Mr. Chesterton the effect is negative. But my point is that such writings do not enter into any serious consideration of the relation of Religion and Literature: because they are conscious operations in a world in which it is assumed that Religion and Literature are not

related. It is a conscious and limited relating. What I want is a literature which should be *un*consciously, rather than deliberately and defiantly, Christian: because the work of Mr. Chesterton has its point from appearing in a world which is definitely not Christian.

I am convinced that we fail to realize how completely, and yet how irrationally, we separate our literary from our religious judgements. If there could be a complete separation, perhaps it might not matter: but the separation is not, and never can be, complete. If we exemplify literature by the novel – for the novel is the form in which literature affects the greatest number – we may remark this gradual secularization of literature during at least the last three hundred years. Bunyan, and to some extent Defoe, had moral purposes: the former is beyond suspicion, the latter may be suspect. But since Defoe the secularization of the novel has been continuous. There have been three chief phases. In the first, the novel took the Faith, in its contemporary version, for granted, and omitted it from its picture of life. Fielding, Dickens and Thackeray belong to this phase. In the second, it doubted, worried about, or contested the Faith. To this phase belong George Eliot, George Meredith and Thomas Hardy.[9] To the third phase, in which we are living, belong nearly all contemporary novelists except Mr. James Joyce. It is the phase of those who have never heard the Christian Faith spoken of as anything but an anachronism.

Now, do people in general hold a definite opinion, that is to say religious or anti-religious; and do they read novels, or poetry for that matter, with a separate compartment of their minds? The common ground between religion and fiction is behaviour. Our religion imposes our ethics, our judgement and criticism of ourselves, and our behaviour towards[10†] our fellow men. The fiction that we read affects our behaviour towards our fellow men, affects our patterns of ourselves. When we read of human beings behaving in certain ways, with the approval of the author, who gives his benediction to this behaviour by his attitude towards the result of the behaviour arranged by himself, we can be influenced towards behaving in the same way.[11*] When the contemporary novelist is an individual thinking for himself in isolation, he may have something important to offer to those who are able to receive it. He who is alone may speak to the individual. But the majority of novelists are persons drifting in the stream, only a little faster. They have some sensitiveness, but little intellect.

We are expected to be broadminded about literature, to put aside prejudice or conviction, and to look at fiction as fiction and at drama as drama.

With what is inaccurately called "censorship" in this country – with what is much more difficult to cope with than an official censorship, because it represents the opinions of individuals in an irresponsible democracy, I have very little sympathy; partly because it so often suppresses the wrong books, and partly because it is little more effective than Prohibition of Liquor; partly because it is one manifestation of the desire that state control should take the place of decent domestic influence; and wholly because it acts only from custom and habit, not from decided theological and moral principles. Incidentally, it gives people a false sense of security in leading them to believe that books which are *not* suppressed are harmless. Whether there *is* such a thing as a harmless book I am not sure: but there very likely are books so utterly unreadable as to be incapable of injuring anybody. But it is certain that a book is not harmless merely because no one is consciously offended by it. And if we, as readers, keep our religious and moral convictions in one compartment, and take our reading merely for entertainment, or on a higher plane, for aesthetic pleasure, I would point out that the author, whatever his conscious intentions in writing, in practice recognizes no such distinctions.[12] The author of a work of imagination is trying to affect us wholly, as human beings, whether he knows it or not; and we are affected by it, as human beings, whether we intend to be or not. I suppose that everything we eat has some other effect upon us than merely the pleasure of taste and mastication; it affects us during the process of assimilation and digestion; and I believe that exactly the same is true of anything we read.

The fact that what we read does not concern merely something called our *literary taste*, but that it affects directly, though only amongst many other influences, the whole of what we are, is best elicited, I think, by a conscientious examination of the history of our individual literary education. Consider the adolescent reading of any person with some literary sensibility. Everyone, I believe, who is at all sensible to the seductions of poetry, can remember some moment in youth when he or she was completely carried away by the work of one poet. Very likely he was carried away by several poets, one after the other. The reason for this passing infatuation is not merely that our sensibility to poetry is keener in adolescence than in maturity. What happens is a kind of inundation, of invasion of the undeveloped personality[13†] by the stronger personality of the poet. The same thing may happen at a later age to persons who have not done much reading. One author takes complete possession of us for a time; then another;

and finally they begin to affect each other in our mind. We weigh one against another; we see that each has qualities absent from others, and qualities incompatible with the qualities of others: we begin to be, in fact, critical; and it is our growing critical power which protects us from excessive possession by any one literary personality. The good critic – and we should all try to be critics, and not leave criticism to the fellows who write reviews in the papers – is the man who, to a keen and abiding sensibility, joins wide and increasingly discriminating reading. Wide reading is not valuable as a kind of hoarding, an accumulation of knowledge, or what sometimes is meant by the term "a well-stocked mind." It is valuable because in the process of being affected by one powerful personality after another, we cease to be dominated by any one, or by any small number. The very different views of life, cohabiting in our minds, affect each other, and our own personality asserts itself and gives each a place in some arrangement peculiar to ourself.

It is simply not true that works of fiction, prose or verse, that is to say works depicting the actions, thoughts and words and passions of imaginary human beings, *directly* extend our knowledge of life. Direct knowledge of life is knowledge directly in relation to ourselves, it is our knowledge of *how* people behave in general, of *what* they are like in general, in so far as that part of life in which we ourselves have participated gives us material for generalization. Knowledge of life obtained through fiction is only possible by another stage of self-consciousness. That is to say, it can only be a knowledge of other people's knowledge of life, not of life itself. So far as we are taken up with the happenings in any novel in the same way in which we are taken up with what happens under our eyes, we are acquiring at least as much falsehood as truth. But when we are developed enough to say: "This is the view of life of a person who was a good observer within his limits, Dickens, or Thackeray, or George Eliot, or Balzac; but he looked at it in a different way from me, because he was a different man; he even selected rather different things to look at, or the same things in a different order of importance, because he was a different man; so what I am looking at is the world as seen by a particular mind" – then we are in a position to gain something from reading fiction. We are learning *something* about life from these authors direct, just as we learn something from the reading of history direct; but these authors are only really helping us when we can see, and allow for, their differences from ourselves.[14]

Now what we get, as we gradually grow up and read more and more, and read a greater diversity of authors, is a variety of views of life. But what

people commonly assume, I suspect, is that we gain this experience of other men's views of life only by "improving reading." This, it is supposed, is a reward we get by applying ourselves to Shakespeare, and Dante, and Goethe, and Emerson, and Carlyle, and dozens of other respectable writers. The rest of our reading for amusement is merely killing time. But I incline to come to the alarming conclusion that it is just the literature that we read for "amusement," or "purely for pleasure" that may have the greatest, and least suspected influence upon us. It is the literature which we read with the least effort that can have the easiest and most insidious influence upon us. Hence it is that the influence of popular novelists, and of popular plays of contemporary life, requires to be scrutinized most closely. And it is chiefly *contemporary* literature that the majority of people ever read in this attitude of "purely for pleasure," of pure passivity.

The relation to my subject of what I have been saying[15†] should now be a little more apparent. Though we may read literature merely for pleasure, of "entertainment" or of "aesthetic enjoyment," this reading never affects simply a sort of special sense: it affects us as entire human beings; it affects our moral and religious existence. And I say that while individual modern writers of eminence can be improving, contemporary literature as a whole tends to be degrading. And that even the effect of the better writers, in an age like ours, may be degrading to some readers; for we must remember that what a writer does to people is not necessarily what he intends to do. It may be only what people are capable of having done to them. People exercise an unconscious selection, in being influenced. A writer like D. H. Lawrence may be in his effect either beneficial or pernicious. I am not even sure that I have not had some pernicious influence myself.

At this point I anticipate a rejoinder from the liberal-minded, from all those who are convinced that if everybody says what he thinks, and does what he likes, things will somehow, by some automatic compensation and adjustment, come right in the end. "Let everything be tried," they say, "and if it is a mistake, then we shall learn by experience." This argument might have some value, if we were always the same generation upon earth; or if, as we know to be not the case, people ever learned much from the experience of their elders. These liberals are convinced that only by what is called unrestrained individualism, will truth ever emerge. Ideas, views of life, they think, issue distinct from independent heads, and in consequence of their knocking violently against each other, the fittest survive, and truth rises triumphant. Any one who dissents from this view must be either a

mediaevalist, wishful only to set back the clock, or else a fascist, and probably both.

If the mass of contemporary authors were really individualists, every one of them inspired Blakes, each with his separate vision, and if the mass of the contemporary public were really a mass of *individuals,* there might be something to be said for this attitude. But this is not, and never has been, and never will be. It is not only that the reading individual today (or at any day) is not enough an individual to be able to absorb all the "views of life" of all the authors pressed upon us by the publishers' advertisements and the reviewers, and to be able to arrive at wisdom by considering one against another. It is that the contemporary authors are not individuals enough either. It is not that the world of separate individuals of the liberal democrat is undesirable; it is simply that this world does not exist. For the reader of contemporary literature is not, like the reader of the established great literature of all time, exposing himself to the influence of divers and contradictory personalities; he is exposing himself to a mass movement of writers who, each of them, think that they have something individually to offer, but are really all working together in the same direction. And there never was a time, I believe, when the reading public was so large, or so helplessly exposed to the influences of its own time. There never was a time, I believe, when those who read at all, read so many more books by living authors than books by dead authors; there never was a time so completely parochial, so shut off from the past. There may be too many publishers; there are certainly too many books published; and the journals ever incite the reader to "keep up" with what is being published. Individualistic democracy has come to high tide: and it is more difficult today to be an individual than it ever was before.

Within itself, modern literature has perfectly valid distinctions of good and bad, better and worse: and I do not wish to suggest that I confound Mr. Bernard Shaw with Mr. Noel Coward, Mrs. Woolf with Miss Mannin.[16] On the other hand, I should like it to be clear that I am not defending a "high"-brow against a "low"-brow literature. What I do wish to affirm is that the whole of modern literature is corrupted by what I call Secularism, that it is simply unaware of, simply cannot understand the meaning of, the primacy of the supernatural over the natural life: of something which I assume to be our primary concern.

I do not want to give the impression that I have delivered a mere fretful jeremiad against contemporary literature. Assuming a common attitude

between my readers, or some of my readers,[17†] and myself, the question is not so much, what is to be done about it? as, how should we behave towards it?

I have suggested that the liberal attitude towards literature will not work. Even if the writers who make their attempt to impose their "view of life" upon us were really distinct individuals, even if we as readers were distinct individuals, what would be the result? It would be, surely, that each reader would be impressed, in his reading, merely by what he was previously prepared to be impressed by; he would follow the "line of least resistance," and there would be no assurance that he would be made a better man. For literary judgement we need to be acutely aware of two things at once: of "what we like," and of "what we *ought* to like." Few people are honest enough to know either. The first means knowing what we really feel: very few know that. The second involves understanding our shortcomings; for we do not really know what we ought to like unless we also know why we ought to like it, which involves knowing why we don't yet like it. It is not enough to understand what we ought to be, unless we know what we are; and we do not understand what we are, unless we know what we ought to be. The two forms of self-consciousness, knowing what we are and what we ought to be, must go together.

It is our business, as readers of literature, to know what we like. It is our business, as Christians, *as well as* readers of literature, to know what we ought to like. It is our business as honest men not to assume that whatever we like is what we ought to like; and it is our business as honest Christians not to assume that we do like what we ought to like. And the last thing I would wish for would be the existence of two literatures, one for Christian consumption and the other for the pagan world. What I believe to be incumbent upon all Christians is the duty of maintaining consciously certain standards and criteria of criticism over and above those applied by the rest of the world; and that by these criteria and standards everything that we read must be tested. We must remember that the greater part of our current reading matter is written for us by people who have no real belief in a supernatural order, though some of it may be written by people with individual notions of a supernatural order which are not ours. And the greater part of our reading matter is coming to be written by people who not only have no such belief, but are even ignorant of the fact that there are still people in the world so "backward" or so "eccentric" as to continue to believe. So long as we are conscious of the gulf fixed between ourselves and the

greater part of contemporary literature, we are more or less protected from being harmed by it, and are in a position to extract from it what good it has to offer us.

There are a very large number of people in the world today who believe that all ills are fundamentally economic. Some believe that various specific economic changes alone would be enough to set the world right; others demand more or less drastic changes in the social as well, changes chiefly of two opposed types. These changes demanded, and in some places carried out, are alike in one respect, that they hold the assumptions of what I call Secularism: they concern themselves only with changes of a temporal, material, and external nature; they concern themselves with morals only of a collective nature. In an exposition of one such new faith I read the following words:

> [I]n our morality the one single test of any moral question is whether it impedes or destroys in any way the power of the individual to serve the State. [The individual] must answer the questions: "Does this action injure the nation? Does it injure other members of the nation? Does it injure my ability to serve the nation?" And if the answer is clear on all those questions, the individual has absolute liberty to do as he will . . .[18]

Now I do not deny that this is a kind of morality, and that it is capable of great good within limits; but I think that we should all repudiate a morality which had no higher ideal to set before us than that. It represents, of course, one of the violent reactions we are witnessing, against the view that the community is solely for the benefit of the individual; but it is equally a gospel of this world, and of this world alone. My complaint against modern literature is of the same kind. It is not that modern literature is in the ordinary sense "immoral" or even "amoral"; and in any case to prefer that charge would not be enough. It is simply that it repudiates, or is wholly ignorant of, our most fundamental and important beliefs; and that in consequence its tendency is to encourage its readers to get what they can out of life while it lasts, to miss no "experience" that presents itself, and to sacrifice themselves, if they make any sacrifice at all, only for the sake of tangible benefits to others in this world either now or in the future. We shall certainly continue to read the best of its kind, of what our time provides; but we must tirelessly criticize it according to our own principles, and not merely according to the principles admitted by the writers and by the critics who discuss it in the public press.

NOTES

1. As printed in *SE*; originally published in *Faith that Illuminates*, ed. with an introduction by V. A. Demant (London: Centenary Press, 1935). Pp. 192; 29-54. On the leaf preceding the essay in Demant's volume, TSE is selectively identified as "Editor of *The Criterion*; Visiting Professor of Poetry, Harvard, U.S.A., 1932-3; Author of *The Rock*, *After Strange Gods*, &c." (29).

V. A. (Vigo Auguste) Demant (1893-1983), Vicar of St. John-the-Divine, Richmond, Surrey, wrote to TSE on 8 Dec 1933, inviting him to give this address: "Could you do me a personal kindness? I have just come to this Parish . . . and I want to make it a centre of Religious Education in the district. I am therefore planning a course of public lectures in April and May next year, and I wonder if you could, without too much care, lead off with a lecture on 'Religion and Literature' on Tuesday April 17th at 8.15 p.m. What I have in mind is that the theme of the world's great literature, and of a good deal of inferior stuff too, is the same human problem which religion sets in a different plane. All the lecturers will be Catholic – and this one will be followed by five others on Religion & Politics, – economics – the machine – world order – and Religion and Philosophy etc." TSE accepted the invitation on 12 Dec.

2*. TSE's note: "As an example of literary criticism given greater significance by theological interests, I would call attention to Theodor Haecker: *Virgil* (Sheed and Ward)." Arthur Wesley Wheen's translation of Haecker's *Vergil, Vater des Abendlandes* (1931) was published in 1934 as *Virgil, Father of the West*. This English translation was warmly reviewed by William Force Stead in the *Criterion* of July 1935 (680-82). TSE used a passage from Haecker's *Was ist der Mensch?* for the epigraph of *After Strange Gods* (5.48) and published his "Theodicy and Tragedy" in the *Criterion* of Apr 1934 (371-81).

3. F. H. Bradley, *Principles of Logic* (1883); Georges-Louis Leclerc, Comte de Buffon (1707-88), author of the thirty-six-volume *Histoire naturelle, générale et particulière*, the first of which appeared in 1749.

4†. In *Faith that Illuminates*: "easily fulminate for a whole hour"

5. John Livingston Lowes gave his lecture on the King James Bible, "The Noblest Monument of English Prose," at Harvard University on 19 Feb 1923, subsequently published in the *Harvard Alumni Bulletin* (vol 25, no. 21) and reprinted in several of Lowes's essay collections, including *Of Reading Books* (1930). TSE quotes Lowes in "The Bible as Scripture and as Literature" (4.708 n.32).

6. In his British Council essay, *George Herbert* (London: Longmans, Green, 1962), TSE recasts this idea: "The great danger, for the poet who would write religious verse, is that of setting down what he would like to feel rather than be faithful to the expression of what he really feels" (24).

7*. TSE's note: "I note that in an address delivered in Swansea some years later (subsequently published in *The Welsh Review* under the title of 'What Is Minor Poetry?' I stated with some emphasis my opinion that Herbert is a major, not a minor poet. I agree with my later opinion [1949]."

In 1949, while preparing "Religion and Literature" (1935) for inclusion in the American "new edition" of *SE* (1950), which preceded the English third edition (1951) by eleven months, TSE dated in the new note his reaffirmation of Herbert's major status, as stated earlier in "What Is Minor Poetry?" (1944). TSE's 1944 address to the Association of Bookmen of Swansea and West Wales was first published in the same year. There, TSE describes Herbert's oeuvre as "more than the sum of its parts": "What has at first the appearance of a succession of beautiful but separate

lyrics, comes to reveal itself as a continued religious meditation with an intellectual framework. . . . So in the end, I, for one, cannot admit that Herbert can be called a 'minor' poet: for it is not of a few favourite poems that I am reminded when I think of him, but of the whole work" (6.572).

8. In his 1933 Harvard course (4.767), TSE discussed Chesterton's *The Man Who Was Thursday: A Nightmare* (1908), a popular detective story that offers a serious theological and social critique of modernity. Similarly, the Father Brown mysteries – a series of stories begun in 1910 and eventually collected into five volumes – feature a Roman Catholic priest in the role of detective; the titular character solves cases as much from rational thinking as from his theological understanding of human evil.

9. In TSE's 1917 syllabus for *A Course of Twenty-Five Lectures on Victorian Literature* (1.587-88), many of these authors are singled out for study: Dickens, Thackeray, George Eliot, Meredith, and Hardy.

10†. In *Faith that Illuminates*: "toward"

11*. TSE's note: "Here and later I am indebted to Montgomery Belgion: *The Human Parrot* (chapter on The Irresponsible Propagandist)." *The Human Parrot and Other Essays* (Oxford UP) was published in 1931. While TSE acknowledges his debt to Belgion here, Belgion's own argument is in turn indebted to TSE, whose description of "*significant* emotion" (2.112) from "Tradition and the Individual Talent" informs Belgion's distinction between naive and critical appreciation of art (78). As for TSE's particular claim about fiction affecting behavior, Belgion argues: "Countless people, refusing to receive their moral precepts at the hands of the Churches, do now derive their views of how one should conduct one's life from the fiction they have read, and also from the theatrical performances they have attended" (75).

12. Belgion: "there is no question of an author's aiming consciously in his work at the illustration of a theory [of life]; he does it in spite of himself, necessarily" (86).

13†. In *Faith that Illuminates*: "undeveloped personality, the empty (swept and garnished) room, by the stronger"

14. A central argument in Belgion's "The Irresponsible Propagandist" is that literary works can never be judged as "true to life": "we can never be sure, when we seem to be gleaning something new in our 'knowledge of mankind' from a narrative, that that about which we are learning really is life. For that what we glean is new to us means that we have not already found it out from actual experience, and this in turn implies that we are unable to make the indispensable comparison. . . . It must be absurd to believe . . . that the novel can carry its readers forward in their knowledge of mankind; for any knowledge of mankind in a novel can be accessible only to those who already possess that knowledge" (83-85).

15†. In *Faith that Illuminates*: "The relation of what I have been saying to the subject announced for my discourse"

16. Ethel Mannin (1900-84) was a prolific and popular British author whose works included autobiography, novels, and travelogues.

17†. In *Faith that Illuminates*: "between you, or some of you"

18. On 22 Mar 1933, Sir Oswald Mosley delivered a speech at the English-Speaking Union on "The Philosophy of Fascism," large portions of which (including the passage TSE cites) were reproduced in James Drennan, *B.U.F.: Oswald Mosley and British Fascism* (London: John Murray, 1934), 279-87; here 282-83. The full text of the speech was published in the *Fascist Quarterly*, 1.1 (1935), 35-46.

Introduction to *Selected Poems*, by Marianne Moore

London: Faber & Faber, 1935. Pp. 142; Introduction, 5-12.[1]

We know very little about the value of the work of our contemporaries, almost as little as we know about our own. It may have merits which exist only for contemporary sensibility; it may have concealed virtues which will only become apparent with time. How it will rank when we are all dead authors ourselves we cannot say with any precision. If one is to talk about one's contemporaries at all, therefore, it is important to make up our minds as to what we can affirm with confidence, and as to what must be a matter of doubting conjecture. The last thing, certainly, that we are likely to know about them is their "greatness," or their relative distinction or triviality in relation to the standard of "greatness." For in greatness are involved moral and social relations, relations which can only be perceived from a remoter perspective, and which may be said even to be created in the process of history: we cannot tell, in advance, what any poetry is going to do, how it will operate upon later generations. But the *genuineness* of poetry is something which we have some warrant for believing that a small number, but only a small number, of contemporary readers can recognise. I say positively only a small number, because it seems probable that when any poet conquers a really large public in his lifetime, an increasing proportion of his admirers will admire him for extraneous reasons. Not necessarily for bad reasons, but because he becomes known merely as a symbol, in giving a kind of stimulation, or consolation, to his readers, which is a function of his peculiar relation to them in time. Such effect upon contemporary readers may be a legitimate and proper result of some great poetry, but it has been also the result of much ephemeral poetry.

It does not seem to matter much whether one has to struggle with an age which is unconscious and self-satisfied, and therefore hostile to new forms of poetry, or with one like the present which is self-conscious and distrustful of itself, and avid for new forms which will give it status and self-respect. For many modern readers any superficial novelty of form is evidence of, or is as good as, newness of sensibility; and if the sensibility is fundamentally dull and second-hand, so much the better; for there is no quicker way of catching an immediate, if transient, popularity, than to serve stale goods in

new packages. One of the tests – though it be only a negative test – of anything really new and genuine, seems to be its capacity for exciting aversion among "lovers of poetry."

I am aware that prejudice makes me underrate certain authors: I see them rather as public enemies than as subjects for criticism; and I dare say that a different prejudice makes me uncritically favourable to others. I may even admire the right authors for the wrong reasons. But I am much more confident of my appreciation of the authors whom I admire, than of my depreciation of the authors who leave me cold or who exasperate me. And in asserting that what I call *genuineness* is a more important thing to recognise in a contemporary than *greatness*, I am distinguishing between his function while living and his function when dead. Living, the poet is carrying on that struggle for the maintenance of a living language, for the maintenance of its strength, its subtlety, for the preservation of quality of feeling, which must be kept up in every generation; dead, he provides standards for those who take up the struggle after him. Miss Moore is, I believe, one of those few who have done the language some service in my lifetime.

So far back as my memory extends, which is to the pages of *The Egoist* during the War, and of *The Little Review* and *The Dial* in the years immediately following, Miss Moore has no immediate poetic derivations. I cannot, therefore, fill up my pages with the usual account of influences and development. There is one early poem, "A Talisman," not reprinted in the text of this volume, which I will quote in full here, because it suggests a slight influence of H. D., certainly of H. D. rather than of any other "Imagist":[2]

Under a splintered mast
torn from the ship and cast
    near her hull,

a stumbling shepherd found
embedded in the ground,
    a sea-gull

of lapis lazuli,
a scarab of the sea,
    with wings spread –

curling its coral feet,
parting its beak to greet
    men long dead. [9]

The sentiment is commonplace, and I cannot see what a bird carved of *lapis lazuli* should be doing with *coral* feet; but even here the cadence, the use of rhyme, and a certain authoritativeness of manner distinguish the poem. Looking at Miss Moore's poems of a slightly later period, I should say that she had taken to heart the repeated reminder of Mr. Pound: that poetry should be as well written as prose.[3] She seems to have saturated her mind in the perfections of prose, in its precision rather than its purple; and to have found her rhythm, her poetry, her appreciation of the individual word, for herself.

The first aspect in which Miss Moore's poetry is likely to strike the reader is that of minute detail rather than that of emotional unity. The gift for detailed observation, for finding the exact words for some experience of the eye, is liable to disperse the attention of the relaxed reader. The minutiae may even irritate the unwary, or arouse in them only the pleasurable astonishment evoked by the carved ivory ball with eleven other balls inside it, the full-rigged ship in a bottle, the skeleton of the crucifix-fish.[4] The bewilderment consequent upon trying to follow so alert an eye, so quick a process of association, may produce the effect of some "metaphysical" poetry. To the moderately intellectual the poems may appear to be intellectual exercises; only to those whose intellection moves more easily will they immediately appear to have emotional value. But the detail has always its service to perform to the whole. The similes are there for use; as the mussel-shell "opening and shutting itself like an injured fan"[5] (where *injured* has an ambiguity good enough for Mr. Empson),[6] the waves "as formal as the scales on a fish."[7] They make us see the object more clearly, though we may not understand immediately why our attention has been called to this object, and though we may not immediately grasp its association with a number of other objects. So, in her amused and affectionate attention to animals – from the domestic cat, or "To popularize the mule," to the most exotic strangers from the tropics,[8] she succeeds at once in startling us into an unusual awareness of visual patterns, with something like the fascination of a high-powered microscope.

Miss Moore's poetry, or most of it, might be classified as "descriptive" rather than "lyrical" or "dramatic." Descriptive poetry is supposed to be dated to a period, and to be condemned thereby; but it is really one of the permanent modes of expression. In the eighteenth century – or say a period which includes *Cooper's Hill*, *Windsor Forest*, and Gray's *Elegy*[9] – the scene described is a point of departure for meditations on one thing or another. The poetry of the Romantic Age, from Byron at his worst to Wordsworth

at his best, wavers between the reflective and the evocative; but the description, the picture set before you, is always there for the same purpose. The aim of "imagism," so far as I understand it, or so far as it had any, was to induce a peculiar concentration upon something visual, and to set in motion an expanding succession of concentric feelings. Some of Miss Moore's poems – for instance with animal or bird subjects – have a very wide spread of association. It would be difficult to say what is the "subject-matter" of "The Jerboa" [22-27]. For a mind of such agility, and for a sensibility so reticent, the minor subject, such as a pleasant little sand-coloured skipping animal, may be the best release for the major emotions. Only the pedantic literalist could consider the subject-matter to be trivial; the triviality is in himself. We all have to choose whatever subject-matter allows us the most powerful and most secret release; and that is a personal affair.

The result is often something that the majority will call frigid; for feeling[10†] in one's own way, however intensely, is likely to look like frigidity to those who can only feel in accepted ways.

> ["]The deepest feeling always shows itself in silence;
> not in silence, but restraint."[11]

It shows itself in a control which makes possible the fusion of the ironic-conversational and the high-rhetorical, as

> I recall their magnificence, now not more magnificent
> than it is dim. It is difficult to recall the ornament,
> speech, and precise manner of what one might
> call the minor acquaintances twenty
> years back . . .
>
> ". . . strict with tension, malignant
> in its power over us and deeper
> than the sea when it proffers flattery in exchange for hemp,
> rye, flax, horses, platinum, timber and fur."[12]

As one would expect from the kind of activity which I have been trying to indicate, Miss Moore's versification is anything but "free." Many of the poems are in exact, and sometimes complicated formal patterns, and move with the elegance of a minuet. ("Elegance," indeed, is one of her certain attributes.)[13] Some of the poems (e.g. "Marriage," "An Octopus") are unrhymed; in others (e.g. "Sea Unicorns and Land Unicorns") rhyme or

assonance is introduced irregularly; in a number of the poems rhyme is part of a regular pattern interwoven with unrhymed endings. Miss Moore's use of rhyme is in itself a definite innovation in metric.

In the conventional forms of rhyme the stress given by the rhyme tends to fall in the same place as the stress given by the sense. The extreme case, at its best, is the pentameter couplet of Pope. Poets before and after Pope have given variety, sometimes at the expense of smoothness, by deliberately separating the stresses, from time to time; but this separation – often effected simply by longer periods or more involved syntax – can hardly be considered as more than a deviation from the norm for the purpose of avoiding monotony. The tendency of some of the best contemporary poetry is of course to dispense with rhyme altogether; but some of those who do use it have used it here and there to make a pattern directly in contrast with the sense and rhythm pattern, to give a greater intricacy. Some of the internal rhyming of Hopkins is to the point. (Genuine or auditory internal rhyme must not be confused with false or visual internal rhyme. If a poem reads just as well when cut up so that all the rhymes fall at the end of lines, then the internal rhyme is false and only a typographical caprice, as in Oscar Wilde's *Sphinx*.)[14] This rhyme, which forms a pattern *against* the metric and sense pattern of the poem, may be either heavy or light – that is to say, either *heavier* or *lighter* than the other pattern. The two kinds, heavy and light, have doubtless different uses which remain to be explored. Of the *light* rhyme Miss Moore is the greatest living master; and indeed she is the first, so far as I know, who has investigated its possibilities. It will be observed that the effect sometimes requires giving a word a slightly more analytical pronunciation, or stressing a syllable more than ordinarily:

al-

ways has been – at the antipodes from the init-
ial great truths. "Part of it was crawling, part of it
was about to crawl, the rest
was torpid in its lair." In the short-legged, fit-
ful advance . . .[15]

It is sometimes obtained by the use of articles as rhyme words:

an
injured fan.

The barnacles which encrust the side
of the wave, cannot hide . . .

the
turquoise sea
of bodies. The water drives a wedge . . .[16]

In a good deal of what is sometimes (with an unconscious theological innuendo) called "modernist" verse one finds either an excess or a defect of technical attention. The former appears in an emphasis upon words rather than things, and the latter in an emphasis upon things and an indifference to words. In either case, the poem is formless, just as the most accomplished sonnet, if it is an attempt to express matter unsuitable for sonnet form, is formless. But a precise fitness of form and matter means also a balance between them: thus the form, the pattern movement, has a solemnity of its own (e.g. Shakespeare's songs), however light and gay the human emotion concerned; and a gaiety of its own, however serious or tragic the emotion. The choruses of Sophocles, as well as the songs of Shakespeare, have another concern besides the human action of which they are spectators, and without this other concern there is not poetry. And on the other hand, if you aim only at the poetry in poetry, there is no poetry either.

My conviction, for what it is worth, has remained unchanged for the last fourteen years: that Miss Moore's poems form part of the small body of durable poetry written in our time; of that small body of writings, among what passes for poetry, in which an original sensibility and alert intelligence and deep feeling have been engaged in maintaining the life of the English language.

The original suggestion was that I should make a selection, from both previously published and more recent poems. But Miss Moore exercised her own rights of proscription first, so drastically, that I have been concerned to preserve rather than abate. I have therefore hardly done more than settle the order of the contents.[17] This book contains all that Miss Moore was willing to reprint from the volume *Observations* (The Dial Press, New York, 1924), together with the poems written since that date which she is willing to publish.

T. S. E.

AUGUST, 1934.

NOTES

1. On 5 Jan 1934, TSE wrote to Moore, inviting her to place an edition of her poems with Faber. Moore responded with hesitation on 18 Jan: "I am in a dilemma. I have not yet quite

enough for a book, nor do I forget that you might not care to sponsor the pieces when you saw them" (*The Selected Letters of Marianne Moore*, ed. Bonnie Costello, et al. New York: Knopf, 1997, 317). On 31 Jan, TSE wrote to reassure her: "What I had in mind was your collected/ selected poems, 'what you wish to preserve' of all your work up to date – the volume you published some years ago (did it include 'Marriage'?) and what you have written since. Little enough, I know – that is to your credit, and also to be expected of your type of mind: but from a publisher's point of view, I know that there is enough" (*L7* 54). After further communications stretching into early Oct, proofs of the volume were sent to Moore, who was overwhelmed by TSE's introduction: "One could scarcely be human and not wish your 'Introduction' might have the effect of a tidal wave, on the public, that it has had on me. The energy of thought that you bring to bear [on] behalf of this venture is the kind one summons in a case of fire or flood, and is a generosity the most self-ministering could not hope or pray for. And you do it with such sobriety and fine dignity" (329). Macmillan published the American edition on 9 Apr 1935; the Faber edition followed two days later.

2. TSE reviewed Moore's *Poems* (London: Egoist Press, 1921) in 1923, mentioning "Talisman" briefly there (2.496).

3. Pound commended the discipline of good prose to the would-be writer of poetry in his article "A Few Don'ts by an Imagiste" (*Poetry*, 1.6 [1913], 200-06). A year later, Pound attributes the idea to Ford Madox Hueffer in his review of Hueffer's *Collected Poems* (1913, postdated 1914). Pound's oft-quoted exhortation from this review, seemingly pithy, is actually set within a more syntactically complicated sentence: "I can not belittle my belief that Mr. Hueffer's realization that poetry should be written at least as well as prose will have as wide a result." "Mr. Hueffer and the Prose Tradition in Verse" (*Poetry*, 4.3 [1914], 115); rpt. "The Prose Tradition in Verse," *Literary Essays of Ezra Pound* (London: Faber & Faber, 1954), 371.

4. The inner layers – all freely rotating spheres – of what are sometimes called Chinese puzzle balls can be manipulated with a pin to align the holes through which they were carved. The point of both the puzzle ball and the ship in a bottle is not to disassemble the puzzle but to admire the craftsmanship that went into its making. The skull of the hardhead catfish (*Ariopsis felis*) is an object of local, pious veneration, its bony plate presumably resembling a crucifix.

5. From "The Fish" (48); here, and in the next quotation, TSE neglects to indicate line or stanza breaks (*read*: "like // an / injured fan" and "scales / on").

6. A reference to William Empson's *Seven Types of Ambiguity* (1930).

7. From "Part of a Novel, Part of a Poem, Part of a Play" (17).

8. "Peter" is Moore's domestic cat (64-65); the mule kicks off "The Labours of Hercules" (75-76); tropical reptiles, mammals, and birds populate "The Plumet Basilisk" (32-37) and other of Moore's poems.

9. John Denham's most famous poem, *Cooper's Hill* (1642); Alexander Pope's *Windsor-Forest* (1713); Thomas Gray's *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard* (1751).

10†. In American edition: "for to feel things"

11. "Silence" (121)

12. "The Monkeys" (57); TSE skips several lines between the ellipses and neglects the quotation marks in the second stanza.

13. The opening poem in Moore's *Selected Poems* contains the lines: "Liking an elegance of which / the source is not bravado" ("Part of a Novel, Part of a Poem, Part of a Play").

14. Wilde's "The Sphinx" was published in 1894.

15. "In the Days of Prismatic Colour" (62)

16. "The Fish" (48); after the first ellipsis, TSE skips several lines and an additional stanza.

17. Regarding the proposed order of poems, TSE wrote to Moore on 20 June 1934: "I want to start with the new poems hitherto uncollected, and shove some of the slighter pieces towards the end. At your simplest, you baffle those who love 'simple' poetry; and so one might as well put on difficult stuff at once, and only bid for the readers who are willing and accustomed to take a little trouble over poetry. I think this will pay better; and will excite the booksellers more" (*L7* 248)

A Commentary

The Criterion: A Literary Review, 14 (Apr 1935) 431-36

The usual form in which Communism is made attractive to us is that of economic necessity. We agree that the present economic system is not very satisfactory, and that it works in such a way as frequently to offend our feelings of humanity and our notions of justice; we are aware that it frequently rewards excessively a type of person which, at best, is hardly that which we most admire. We may also agree that it works less and less efficiently, and that some drastic alteration will be necessary if life is to be made even tolerable. When any revolutionary change of system is proposed, we have to consider whether the diagnosis of our troubles is correct, and whether the remedy offered is likely to work; and any scheme which looks as if it might work better than the present one has to be seriously considered. We know, in a general way, that any thorough-going change of economic system will tend to alter the whole structure of society, to affect our private behaviour and moral prejudices. These remoter, but most important consequences, we cannot accurately predict: some may be for better, others for worse; but if a scheme commends itself to us on the whole, we are willing to take risks for the sake of ending an intolerable situation.

Mr. Middleton Murry and Professor John Macmurray, in the volume *Marxism*[1]* approach the matter the other way about. They do not ask us to accept whatever moral and social changes Communism will induce, for the sake of a demonstrably more workable and satisfactory economic organization. They recommend these moral, philosophical and religious changes directly for their own sake; and they seem to say in effect that a change of heart and the understanding of a system of philosophy, are more essential than a grasp of economic principles. Indeed, they almost persuade us that Marxism is the faith we ought to adopt, even if its economics will not work any better than what we have now. This is, for the person whose approach is not that of the trained economist, a very interesting point of view.

Neither Mr. Murry, nor Mr. Macmurray, would admit what I say in the preceding paragraph as a fair statement of their faith. Being monists, they must surely affirm that what is, in one aspect, the true faith, is in the other aspect the true economic order. But it is my contention that you cannot

identify religion and economics; and that those who attempt to do so, prove on examination either to subordinate the religion to the economics, or the economics to the religion. It is frequently said that Communism is a religion;[2] but at the same time Communism claims the right of succession to every economic system, and the right of priority over every economic theory; though its right over other economic theories amounts to this, that it is also a religion and they are concerned only with the temporal world. For Mr. Murry and Mr. Macmurray, I believe, the religious aspect of Communism is dominant over the economic aspect.

Mr. Macmurray does, it is true, occasionally dangle before us the economic advantages which we are commonly assured will be ours under Communism. He says that progress consists in "man's gradual conquest of nature, his gradual abolition of the harshness of primitive conditions, the elimination of starvation and disease, the provision of a more and more adequate supply, for more and more people, of the necessaries of life, and of a life which is itself of fuller and richer development."[3] This is all excellent, especially if we are allowed to decide for ourselves what meaning lurks behind that dark phrase "fuller and richer development." It is true that we might like to add a few more items to the list, such as "man's gradual conquest of himself"; but there is nothing in the list which one would wish to strike out. But Mr. Macmurray's partner, Mr. Murry, does not intend to let us choose according to our own notions of fuller and richer development. We need a regime as severe in its way as that of a Trappist or a Yogi, if we are to become complete Marxians. We have to penetrate the veil of illusion, and realize that as individuals we do not exist. What exists is a "totality of social relations" [11]; once we realize this, we disappear, "dissolved into the social whole" [15]. For "the social whole is[4] primary, the individual epiphenomenal" [16].

Mr. Murry gets, I suppose, a kind of mystical rapture out of this notion of dissolution;[5] but it is all very odd, because we have sometimes been tempted to believe that it was society that was epiphenomenal, and only Mr. Murry that was primary. Mr. Murry before he became a Marxian was already the only Christian; and at times he has appeared to be the only Marxian. The social whole sometimes appears to dissolve into Mr. Murry. It is not in the least surprising, of course, to find Mr. Murry identifying Christianity with Marxism;[6] this is the sort of dissolving trick which we are accustomed to see this wizard perform; and no one can be astonished to see Marx himself emerge with wings and a harp from the verbal bath in

which Mr. Murry immerses him.[7] But it is, to use one of Mr. Murry's favoured words, epoch-making.[8]

I feel a much greater diffidence in criticizing Mr. Macmurray. He is one of the most brilliant philosophers now living; with a skill in eristic, a lucid and persuasive style, which I can only admire. But I find the same difficulty with the philosophies of both these writers that I found many years ago in trying to read Hegel. It is all very brilliant, and Mr. Macmurray's [philosophy] at least looks very coherent; it provides excellent mental exercise; but I cannot see any reason for believing it to be true. It may be, but again it may not. I wish that I had taken Hegel more seriously in my youth, but like many people I was caught napping; I never expected that Hegel, having been inverted by a Jewish economist for his own purposes, should come back again into favour. Neither the doctrine of Kant nor that of any of his disciples has been universally accepted as true, or as compatible with the Christian tradition. That will not bother either of our authors, who both have their own notions of Christianity which are not mine. Nor does my opinion of their philosophy and of their Christianity seem to me to have any bearing upon communism, but only on the brand of communism here offered: to make Communism depend upon the logomachies of Hegel seems to me as precarious and unnecessary as to make Christianity depend upon the demonstrations of St. Thomas Aquinas.

So long as we remain in a world of pure abstraction, I find myself carried away, as in the evolution of a dance, by the persuasive strains of the Macmurray metaphysic. The moment the music stops, a voice whispers in my ear, *You don't need to believe this unless you want to*. Mr. Murry and Mr. Macmurray prove so much too much. One does not need to be impressed by the two magic adjectives, "organic" and "dynamic."[9] One does not need to believe that a society is more admirable because it is "classless." It is enough to believe that economic changes desirable or necessary in themselves will probably lead to the disappearance of classes; I see no reason for believing that either class or classlessness is desirable in itself.[10] But the two principal authors of this book are not satisfied with being Marxian economists: they must be monists too. And I am not at present concerned with the truth or falsity of Marxism as a system of economics, or necessarily with Communism at all: I am concerned with Marxism only in so far as it is a monistic system – that is to say, with the Marxism of Murry and Macmurray, whether it be the Marxism of Marx or not. So far as I can see, theirs is one perfectly justifiable interpretation of Marx, of Marx as a

German Hegelian monist. Whether it is to the advantage of economic Marxism to be identified with the Marx-Hegelian monism is another matter. Other disciples of Marx, more interested in economic programme than in metaphysic, may find it worth while to disengage the economic Marx from the Hegelian Marx.

Mr. Murry and Mr. Macmurray are indeed of an ambition similar to that of certain mediaeval Popes: the unity of the temporal and spiritual power. The "identity of Theory and Practice" [111] is similar; and it does not matter whether we place the emphasis on Theory, like Hegel, or on Practice, like Marx; the monism is the same, and to one who accepts neither Hegel nor Marx, the difference is negligible. It is natural for philosophers, and Messrs. Murry and Macmurray are philosophers, to affirm the primacy of philosophy over politics, just as certain Popes affirmed the primacy of the Holy See over temporal government; but politics, even Communist politics, will go on being the thing of expedients and makeshifts that it always has been. The Christian view is, I think, essentially dualistic. The City of God is at best only realizable on earth under an imperfect likeness: ἐν οὐρανῷ ἴσως παράδειγμα ἀνάκειται.[11] Mr. Murry indeed seems to be quite aware of the essential character of dualism in Christianity. I do not criticize Mr. Murry for rejecting Christianity, but for rejecting it and at the same time professing to be more Christian than anybody except its Founder. "[T]he Marxist reduction of the individual," he says, "is precisely the modern and *real* form of that profound and significant objectification of the individual as a 'creature' which was an essential part of the technique of Christian mysticism when it was a genuine self-purgation, an authentic 'voiding' of oneself" [109]. (Is it now and thus more *real*, than when it was *genuine*?) Mr. Murry may succeed in finding some *analogy* between the two things; but to assert that one is the "modern and real" form of the other, whatever that means, is perhaps to say something which cannot be disproved, because it cannot be proved either.

It is true that some forms of government, of social and economic organization, are incompatible with Christianity; it is not true that Christianity dictates any particular form of organization.[12*] But the impossibility of uniting theory and practice is not characteristic of Christianity alone, but has a natural foundation. Mr. Murry's attempt to unite religion and politics is no happier than any other. He attempts to establish an esoteric Marxism for the true mystical adepts like himself: for those who realize that "the 'individual' is an illusion" [104]. (And for Mr. Murry "individual" and "person"

seem to be identical, since he tells us that at the heart of Marxism lies a "grim effort at depersonalization.")[13] His Marxism is a very different thing from any government we should ever see in practice. I should be more interested to see Communism advocated as a workable scheme for eliminating a great deal of ordinary suffering and injustice, than as a means for experiencing the mystical ecstacies of depersonalization. Marxism may be, for a few philosophers, a religious experience: for the man of action it will only be another style of the art of ruling men.[14]

We have to record with regret the death of an early and valued, though infrequent contributor to *The Criterion*, Frederic Manning.[15] Manning's health was so poor, necessitating a nomadic life in search of climate, that he was able to have neither of the requisites for a reputation in one's own time: a considerable output of writing or a wide social acquaintance. The small number of his writings is not by any means due to ill health alone: he was an exceedingly, indeed an excessively fastidious writer; and spent as much energy in rewriting and destroying what he had rewritten, as would suffice to account for a number of ordinary books. He left *Scenes and Portraits*, a book of imaginary historical dialogues; two small books of verse; and one book, published anonymously, *Her Privates We*, which had a wide and immediate success.[16] His passion for perfection became almost indistinguishable from a passion for destruction of his own work; even *Her Privates We* might never have been written, I believe, without the insistent urging of the friend who published it. Like the late F. S. Oliver – also a friend of *The Criterion* – he was without ambition for notoriety, and had a style of writing, and a frame of mind, suited to a more cultured and better educated age than our own.

T. S. E.

NOTES

1*. TSE's note: "Chapman & Hall [London, 1935]. 5s. The other authors are Mr. N. A. Holdaway and Mr. G. D. H. Cole." Originally sponsored by *The Adelphi* as a set of four public lectures in the spring of 1934, the addresses were expanded for the book version.

2. "Ultimately and essentially, Marxism is not an invitation to pleasant intellectual speculation, but a summons to action . . . It is in this regard that Marxism has been compared, again and again, to religion" (Murry, "On Marxism in General," 5).

3. *Read*: "for more and more people, of the necessities of life, and of a life which is itself of fuller and richer quality. This, Marx meant, is the reality of human development" (Macmurray, "The Nature of Philosophy," 33).

4. *Read*: "was"

5. "There is something perhaps a little 'mystical' about this Marxist conception of the historical mission of the proletariat [to abolish bourgeois society]" (Murry, "Marxism and the Individual," 82).

6. "For my own part, if I were a Christian, I should take very good care to be a Marxist as well. If I believed that Jesus of Nazareth was to judge me on my earthly record, I should be mortally afraid of his asking me: 'Why was I not a Marxist?' . . . For assuredly, it is the next best thing" (Murry, "On Marxism in General," 6).

"Indeed it is far nearer the truth to say that Marxism is the purifying fire through which Christianity *must* go if it is to survive in a form worthy of human respect, than to say that Christianity and Marxism are the enemies who must destroy one another. . . . True Christianity can annihilate Marxism only by accepting it, for Marxism contains the truth that Christianity has corrupted itself by denying" (Murry, "Marxism and the Individual," 95-96).

"I am convinced that unless the 'individual' passes through the fire of this realization that he is 'nothing more' than the focus for the interplay of unconscious social forces, he never will be anything more. 'He that will lose his life, the same shall save it.' If you don't lose it, it won't be saved. For what is this 'life,' of which the prophet of Nazareth spoke in these terms, but precisely this 'bourgeois' conception of the precious 'individuality'?" (Murry, "The New Man," 104).

7. Of Marx's claim that "religion is the opium of the people," Murry argues that Marx's intention of "tenderness and pity" has been "subtly perverted": "Marx, when he wrote it, was not thinking of religion as an opiate administered to the people by some sinister enemies of theirs: but as the self-sought release of suffering humanity from the hitherto inescapable miseries of life. He was thinking of the meaning for the disinherited of the earth of such a message as 'Come unto me all ye that are weary and labour and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest . . .'" (Murry, "Marxism and the Individual," 97-98).

8. "Human activity which had in the past been blind, must now be completely conscious. This was Marx's first great realization: and I am convinced that it was epoch-making" (Murry, "Marxism and the Individual," 85). Likewise, Murry claims that Marx's first clear statement of his thesis is "epoch-making and revolutionary," as well as, on the next page, "epoch-making and incontrovertible" (Murry, "The New Man," 106-07).

9. "The simple secret of [the historical mission of the proletariat] is that Marx conceived the process of human society as an organic and dynamic process – an incessant process of destruction and creation, of which the fundamental motive force was to be found in the development of the productive process itself – the technical evolution of the means by which mankind wins its livelihood from Nature" (Murry, "Marxism and the Individual," 82).

10. TSE's own copy of the book has many question marks and querulous responses penciled in the margins. TSE marks Murry's phrase "achievement of the classless society" (111), responding in the margin: "but the value of this is still to be shown."

11. *Trans*: "perhaps there is a model in heaven." From Plato's *Republic* IX.592b2, which considers the relationship of practical politics to the ideal city.

12*. TSE's note: "See an interesting discussion in *Christendom* (Dec. 1934) between Bro. George Every, S.S.M. and the Editor." Every's article is entitled "Some Reflections on the Idea of Catholic Sociology" ([265]-71) and is preceded in the same issue by a lengthy editorial, signed

"M. B. R." (Maurice Benington Reckitt) ([243]-250). In two subsequent letters to the editor, Every offered further clarifications (Mar 1935, 79; June 1935, 139).

13. "But I do insist, most earnestly, that at the heart of Marxism lies a grim effort at 'depersonalization,' which unless a man has undergone, I do not believe he will ever be a Marxist save in name" (Murry, "The New Man," 105).

14. In Murry's chapter "Marxism and the Individual," he quotes Engels's *Theses on Feuerbach*: "The philosophers have merely given different *interpretations* of the world: the real task is to change it" (85). In his copy of the book, TSE has underlined the phrase "real task," and added: "But surely first to find out whether it shd. and can, be changed."

15. In a letter of 26 Oct 1962, TSE wrote of Manning: "I did not know him well myself, though I have met him – I think directly after the first World War – and I have a precious copy which he gave me of *Her Privates We* and later I went to his funeral in Kensal Green. . . . I remember him as a very careful and meticulous letter writer – one of few people I knew who put the first word of the next page at the bottom of every page of their letter." TSE's copy of *Her Privates We* is inscribed in Manning's handwriting: "T. S. Eliot / from / Private 19022."

16. *Scenes and Portraits* (London: John Murray, 1909) was reviewed by Bonamy Dobrée in the *Criterion* of July 1931 (733-36). Under the pseudonym Private 19022, Manning's widely admired war novel was published in 1929 by his friend Peter Davies with the title *The Middle Parts of Fortune*; the next year it was republished in an abridged edition as *Her Privates We* (London: Peter Davies, 1930); Herbert Read reviewed the latter in the *Criterion* of July 1930 (763-69). Manning published three books of verse: *The Vigil of Brunhild* (1907), *Poems* (1910), and *Eidola* (1917).

Autobiographical Note. *Harvard College Class of 1910: Seventh Report*[1]

Cambridge, MA: Cosmo Press (1935) 219-21

THOMAS STEARNS ELIOT

Born: St. Louis, Mo., Sept. 26, 1888. Parents: Henry Ware Eliot, Charlotte Chauncy Stearns.[2]

Prepared at: Smith Academy, St. Louis, Mo.; Milton Academy, Milton, Mass.

Years in college: 1906-1910. Degrees: A.B., 1910; A.M., 1910; Hon. Litt.D. (Columbia University), 1933.

Occupation: Company Director.

Married: Vivienne Haigh Haigh-Wood, London, England, June 26, 1915.

Harvard brother: Henry Ware Eliot, Jr. '02.

Address: (*business*) 24, Russell Square, London W.C,1., England.

After graduation I spent a year in Paris, attending lectures mostly on philosophy, and then three years in the Harvard Graduate School working for a Ph.D. in philosophy, and also studying Sanskrit and Pali. I was given a Sheldon Fellowship for a year, which I spent at Oxford working at Aristotle under Harold Joachim. At the end of the year I married, and took a job as a master at High Wycombe Grammar School at £140 p.a. with dinner. I never returned to take my final examinations for the Ph.D. but perhaps the dissertation on "Meinong's Gegendstandstheorie considered in Relation to Bradley's Theory of Knowledge" is still preserved in some archive of Emerson Hall.[3] It was accepted, I suppose, because it was unreadable.

After one term at High Wycombe I got a better job at the Highgate School, which brought me £160 p.a. with dinner and tea. I stayed at that for four terms, then chucked it because I did not like teaching. I had a couple of months out of work, and then got a job in the Colonial and Foreign Department of Lloyds Bank at £120 a year and no food.[4] To supplement this I assisted in editing *The Egoist*, which was pleasant, and gave Workers Educational Lectures in the evening, and reviewed books for several periodicals: this meant often enough a fourteen or fifteen hour day.

I entered the bank under the false pretence of being a linguist; nevertheless I was earning £600 p.a. with income tax paid at the time when I left to join the board of Faber & Gwyer, a newly constituted firm which is now Faber & Faber. I was on inward bills, foreign coins and notes, and documentary credits until I was sent to Head Office to take charge of Pre-War Enemy Debts for the bank and its customers. This was a really interesting job, requiring a bookkeeping system which nobody could understand but myself, and a good deal of legal work.

When that petered out, I was put in joint charge of the Foreign Information Bureau, and when the other man left for a better job I was the sole head. We had to look through twenty or so foreign papers a day and turn out a daily sheet of "Extracts from the Foreign Press," which a couple of typists printed on a machine in the office. Sometimes they used too much ink, sometimes not enough. I also wrote a monthly commentary on Foreign Exchange Movements for the Bank Monthly, and had general charge over the ordinary Confidential Reports. I liked the bank and most of the people in it; but I was luckier than most in getting interesting work.

In 1922, as an evening employment, I undertook *The Criterion*. Lady Rothermere wanted to start a literary review, so I ran it for her; but I couldn't take any money for that, as a bank official is not allowed to hold any other regular job. I gradually gave up reviewing, but in 1919 I wrote very regularly for the *Athenaeum* under Middleton Murry; and continued to write leaders for the *Times Literary Supplement*.

Since 1925, when I joined the board of Faber & Gwyer Ltd., my public life has been less eventful. I was Clark Lecturer at Trinity College, Cambridge, in 1926; but the rules of that enlightened college do not require that these lectures be printed. In 1932 I returned to Harvard for a year as Norton Professor.[5]

My ordinary day's work is that of a publisher and an editor.

(When I joined Faber & Gwyer *The Criterion* was rearranged as a limited company under the ownership of the firm and Lady Rothermere; later Lady Rothermere retired and the review now belongs solely to Faber & Faber.) I spend a great deal of time talking to authors whose work I do not want to print. And I have to read a great many manuscripts, most of which are uninteresting. I find that the number of things one is called upon to do, in middle age, increases much more rapidly than one's income – such as taking the chair at meetings, speaking on behalf of good causes, and giving lectures to institutions which can't afford to pay for them.

I have been serving on the Council of the Shakespeare Association, on the Executive Committee of the Sadler's Wells Society, and as Secretary of the Book Committee of the Church Union. My hobbies are theology, Social Credit, and occasionally, when I can find time, writing a little poetry. I have had two quasi-dramatic productions: one at Vassar College and one at Sadler's Wells;[6] and I wish I could write a really good play. I forgot to say that I am obliged to spend a great deal of time answering letters from Ezra Pound, but my firm pays for the stamps.

I like eating and drinking, with a preference for Burgundy and Hock; and I prefer sherry (light dry) to cocktails. I play a bad game of chess, and like such games as poker, rummy and Slippery Ann for low stakes. I like certain very simple and humane kinds of practical joke. Which reminds me that I am also, at the moment of writing, a Churchwarden. I never bet, because I never win.

I have travelled a little in foreign parts, such as California, Scotland and Wales; but I become more and more sedentary, although I have only put on seven pounds in twenty-five years, and find it an effort now even to get as far as Paris. I cannot afford yachting, but I should like to breed bull terriers. I am afraid of high places and cows. I like detective stories but especially the adventures of Arsène Lupin.[7] I tend to fall asleep in club armchairs, but I believe my brain works as well as ever, whatever that is, after I have had my tea.

P.S. I believe I am an Honorary Vice-president of the Distributist League of Glasgow, but I am not sure.[8]

PUBLICATIONS: The following is all I can bother with: Verse: "Poems: 1909-1925"; "Ash-Wednesday," "Sweeney Agonistes," "Journey of the Magi," "A Song for Simeon," "Animula," "Marina," "Triumphal March," "Difficulties of a Statesman," "The Rock," "Pollicle Dogs and Jellicle Cats" (unfinished at this time). "Anabasis" (translated from the French of St. J. Perse). Prose: "Selected Essays," "The Use of Poetry," Harvard University Press, "After Strange Gods," "Elizabethan Essays" (mostly contained in "Selected Essays"). All published here by Faber & Faber. Such as are published in America are by Harcourt Brace, except where indicated. Various things of mine have been translated into French, German, Spanish, Italian, Modern Greek, Dutch, Swedish and Esthonian; and a selected volume has been published in English with introduction and notes in Japanese.

MEMBER OF: Oxford & Cambridge Club, London, England.

NOTES

1. TSE's previous contribution was to the fourth report in 1921 (2.300-01).

2. Here, and in his previous report (2.300), TSE misremembers and misspells: his mother's name was Charlotte Champe Stearns; his sister's name was Charlotte Chauncey Eliot.

3. The original title of TSE's dissertation was *Experience and the Objects of Knowledge in the Philosophy of F. H. Bradley*; TSE discusses Meinong's *Über Gegenstandstheorie* in his dissertation (1.313 ff.). Emerson Hall was the home of the Philosophy Department at Harvard.

4. In a letter of 21 Mar 1917 to his mother written shortly after he was hired by Lloyds, TSE relates that his salary is "£2 10s. a week" (*L1* 180).

5. The Clark Lectures, given at Cambridge in 1926 as *Lectures on the Metaphysical Poetry of the Seventeenth Century with Special Reference to Donne, Crashaw and Cowley* (2.609); the Charles Eliot Norton Lectures, given at Harvard in 1932-33, published as *The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism* (4.574).

6. A version of *Sweeney Agonistes* was first produced at Vassar College in 1933, and *The Rock* had its premiere at Sadler's Wells in 1934.

7. Gentleman-thief and master of disguise, Arsène Lupin is the main character in a series of French detective novels and stories written by Maurice Leblanc.

8. On 9 Jul 1930, J. Griffin, Honorable Secretary of the Distributist League, Glasgow University Branch, wrote to TSE, asking him to accept their nomination as Honorary Vice-President of their club. In response, TSE asked to be shown "any statement of the principles of the League" before committing himself to such an honor (*L5* 262). There seems to be no further correspondence, which may account for TSE's uncertainty.

Views and Reviews [I]

The New English Weekly, 7 (6 June 1935) 151-52

I propose to use the occasional liberty of this page, which the Editor has allowed me, for random comments on my current reading, whether of new books or old ones.[1] If I sometimes commit the error of discussing a book reviewed elsewhere in the paper, I shall excuse myself in advance, on the ground that comment of this kind differs from reviewing proper – in that the book itself is primarily a point of departure for the commentator's reflexions. It may be treated irrelevantly and irreverently, without the reviewer's solemn responsibilities; and the reader of these comments may know as little about the book at the end as he knew at the beginning. My choice, furthermore, may be governed largely by chance, and by a momentary curiosity in one rather than another of the numerous books in bright new jackets with which I come into brief contact. The one subject which I am certain not to bring up is that of contemporary poetry.

My reason for looking with some curiosity at *A Short Introduction to the History of Human Stupidity*, by Walter B. Pitkin, a book of 574 pages, including bibliography and index, was that I had come across the work of Professor Pitkin in 1912.[2] The Six Realists whose co-operative work, *The New Realism* made a considerable stir in the philosophical departments of American universities in that year – and I was then in the philosophical department of an American university – were animated by a missionary zeal against the Hegelian Idealism which was the orthodox doctrine of the philosophical departments of American universities at the time, and which had begun to turn manifestly mouldy.[3] This Idealism was an inheritance from the times in which philosophy was generally taught by retired nonconformist ministers, the better qualified of whom had passed some years in German universities, and who accepted the Ethics of Kant and the Mysticism of Schleiermacher. It is handled with tender reverence and admirable restraint by George Santayana in his essay on "The Genteel Tradition in American Philosophy."[4] The Six Realists were un-Teutonised, and on the whole anti-religious, which was refreshing; they were ascetically, even gloomily, scientific; and they professed considerable respect for Mr. Bertrand Russell and his Cambridge friends. All this was to the good;

but it must be admitted that the New Realism, like most pre-War philosophies, seems now as demoded as ladies' hats of the same period. In 1911, for instance, Professor Pitkin was writing like this (page 429 of *The New Realism*):

> Take the adaptation of the flatfish. We would be setting up a one-to-one correspondence between the phenomenal and the noumenal orders, if we were to declare only that each discernible peculiarity in the flatfish's adaptive reaction resulted from some peculiarity in its noumenal environment. Schematically, this relation would be:

S	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 . . . .
S^1	a b c d e f g h i . . . . etc., etc.

I felt strong grievance against Professor Pitkin and colleagues – including my good friend Professor Ralph Barton Perry – because it was necessary in order to pass examinations to acquire a good deal of this vocabulary, as well as the psychological vocabulary of Professor Münsterberg, which was a different, and still less tasty kettle of fish.[5] But my own feelings, having mellowed with the years, I was interested to see whether Mr. Pitkin's style had mellowed too; and am I glad to report that it has. In *Human Stupidity* he has a lively subject; and although the divisions of the book are headed with fearful words like Pseudopatheia and Psychagnoia, the writing is bright and readable.[6] Readers of *The New English Weekly* hardly need reminding of the economic stupidities of mankind, or need to be told that "While the Texas cotton grower starves because his fields cannot feed him by reason of their abundance, the Hankow coolie goes naked" [1]; but Mr. Pitkin is concerned with any kind of stupidity, and he has anecdotes of all varieties, including a nice little collection of stupidities of all armies during the last war, and of the rulers of all countries at all times. But I am not so much concerned with Mr. Pitkin's diagnosis, which is very convincing, as with his suggestions as to what is to be done about it. Here, I thought, he would have the chance to add his own mite of stupidity to the mass accumulated by innumerable generations. And here it is: *Man will be saved from his own stupidities only by science; not by religion, nor by moral drill, nor – least of all – by laws* (538). And: *The hope of To-morrow is in the intelligent young. They alone are the children of Odysseus*, etc. (539). Thus Mr. Pitkin neatly combines the stupidity of Mr. H. G. Wells with that of the anonymous bishop who wrote the passage about Youth in the last Lambeth Conference Report,

incidentally succeeding in ignoring his own more intelligent comment on primitive civilisations:[7]

> the difference was enough to develop, in the south, an influential age group of elders who, simply because of their longer and richer experience, were able to control, guide and improve the young much more effectively than was done up north. Probably ten times as many upper-class people passed the age of thirty-five down south as up in the north. And this meant the beginning of organized wisdom, organized tribal memories, monuments, inscriptions, formulas, rituals, recipes, ordinances, and written language. (58)[8]

The reader will be able to draw, from this contrast of diagnosis and prescription, a greater number of instructive conclusions than I have space to enumerate here. I content myself with one or two reflexions. One is that the spectacle of the *whole* of human stupidity – and even Professor Pitkin has only selected a few fields which his eye was able to see most clearly – is more than any human mind can endure. Such a gaze into the abyss could only produce paralysis or dementia. We must cling to some faith in human reasonableness, in order to act or speak or write. But we might choose a more reasonable faith than Mr. Pitkin's miserable fetish of Youth. It is only an insult to Youth, to whom we have transmitted our own hereditary diseases, and to whom we do our best to transmit our acquired ones, to say to it "*you* clean up this mess." The faith to which we must cling is that the life of every wholly devoted and selfless man must make a difference to the future – but by "devotion" and "selflessness" I mean something very much more than these words mean in common obituaries and testimonials: I mean the turning away of the soul from the desire of material possessions, of drugged pleasures, of power, or of *happiness*. I mean "love," in the sense in which "love" is the opposite of what we ordinarily mean by "love" (the desire to possess and to dominate or the desire to be dominated by).

I want to mention another book, this is a book which probably will not be reviewed here or elsewhere in England. It is *Le quatrième pouvoir: POLICE*, by André Ulmann (Aubier, Éditions Montaigne, 15 fr.). I cannot confirm the statements, which are astonishing; but this is at any rate the first book I have found to explain to the foreigner the relations between the *Sûreté Générale* and the *Préfecture de Police*.[9] One may learn something about Police in general, from the study of a particular foreign Police Force. I shall end (without comment) with one quotation from this absorbing

book, a quotation which is itself a quotation from "M. Edmond Locard, qui dirigea pendant longtemps la police lyonnaise":

> Le militaire, habitué à avoir raison pour la seule raison que sa manche porte des dorures, offre, avec des airs avantageux un ton cassant, qui, déplorable chez un garde, rend impossible l'exercice du métier d'inspecteur. Je veux bien croire que l'armée est l'école de l'honneur et l'école de la discipline, mais ce que je sais c'est que l'armé n'est pas l'école de la police.[10]

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. TSE wrote to the editor of the *NEW*, Philip Mairet, on 9 May: "*The New English Weekly* seems to me to be looking up. I have been trying to think, now that I have finished a major piece of work, which has taken my spare time through the winter, of some subject on which I could write for you from time to time more or less connectedly."

2. (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1932). Walter Boughton Pitkin (1878-1953), American author on philosophical and psychological subjects, first a lecturer at Columbia University (1905-09) and then a professor in its School of Journalism (1912-43).

3. *The New Realism: Coöperative Studies in Philosophy*, by Edwin B. Holt, Walter T. Marvin, William Pepperrell Montague, Ralph Barton Perry, Walter B. Pitkin and Edward Gleason Spaulding (New York: Macmillan, 1912). TSE's signed copy is annotated. See TSE's discussion of the New Realists in "New Philosophers" (1918) (1.728).

4. "The Genteel Tradition in American Philosophy" (1911), collected in *Winds of Doctrine: Studies in Contemporary Opinion* (London: Dent; New York: Scribner's, 1913), 186-215.

5. TSE took Ralph Barton Perry's course "Philosophy 20d: Seminary in Ethics" in the spring of 1914 (1.147), and annotated Perry's essay, "A Realistic Theory of Independence," in his copy of *The New Realism*. In 1912-13, TSE also attended the class "Philosophy 20b: Seminary in Psychology: Mind and Body" led by the German-American psychologist Hugo Münsterberg (1863-1916) (1.57).

6. The section "Pseudopatheia" includes the chapter "Psychagnoia."

7. TSE criticizes the "superficial philosophy" of H. G. Wells in "Literature and the Modern World" (5.196).

8. Pitkin discusses primitive civilizations in the chapter "Cyclops," especially the section "Firstlings" (51-61). In "Thoughts after Lambeth" (1931), TSE criticized the report on "Youth and its Vocation" in *The Lambeth Conference, 1930: Encyclical Letter from the Bishops, with Resolutions and Reports* (London: S.P.C.K., 1930), [188]-200 (4.224), which is in fact signed "A. F. London: *Chairman*" (200).

9. In *Le Quatrième Pouvoir. Police* [*The Fourth Power: The Police*] (Paris: Fernand Aubier, 1935), the French journalist André Ulmann (1912-70) explains that the French police are divided into two separate units: the Préfecture de police, responsible for Paris, and the Sûreté nationale, responsible for the rest of the country. In chapter X, "Désordre de la police," Ulmann argues that, while their functions are complementary, they are often unaware of each other's activities, this "incoordination des efforts" (185) being at the heart of the disorder in the French police.

10. *Le Quatrième Pouvoir. Police*, 54-55, quoting Edmond Locard (1877-1966), *La Police. Ce qu'elle est. Ce qu'elle devrait être* [*The Police: What It Is, What It Should Be*] (1919). *Trans*: Mr. Edmond Locard was for a long time head of the police in Lyons. . . . The soldier, used to being right solely because his sleeve carries some gilded insignia, presents with an air of superiority an abrupt tone which, deplorable in a guard, makes the exercise of the profession of inspector impossible. I want to believe that the military is the school of honor and discipline, but what I know is that the military is not the school of the police.

Views and Reviews [II]

The New English Weekly, 7 (20 June 1935) 190-91

While there are a number of persons living who can lay some claim to distinction as poets, there are not very many with an equal claim to distinction as masters of prose style. By prose I do not mean the imaginative prose of certain novelists, so much as the kind of prose which figures more largely in anthologies, the prose of historical narration and description, and of philosophical and scientific exposition and argument. There is more capacity than achievement. There is Mr. Herbert Read, whose *In Retreat* is in its kind one of the few prose masterpieces that our period will leave behind;[1] there is Ezra Pound, who can write prose of the very highest quality whenever he forgets to write badly; and there is Mr. Wyndham Lewis whose proud opulence is incapable of contrition. Very likely there are more obscure writers whose steady and reliable excellence will appear more clearly with the passage of time. For of the nineteenth century, it is not now the writers most praised in their own time who still please. The stylists depart: Carlyle is too violent, Ruskin too unrestrained, Meredith too whimsical, Arnold appears conscious of his abilities to the verge of vulgarity and can hardly rise to emotional fervour without falling into intellectual confusion. Those writers remain who were more interested in their subject matter than in their style: Newman, Bradley, perhaps Maine and Bagehot.[2] For interest in what one has to say, rather than conforming to or revolting from a conventional manner, is the essential thing: an interest in the subject, and a grasp of it, which give a proper intellectual and emotional balance, and prevent both conventionality and eccentricity.

The prose writers of the eighteenth century – or rather of the period which includes Dryden and Johnson – have always seemed to me to provide the norm of English prose, something from which it cannot afford to depart too far. Here, at their best, is the perfect anatomy, the perfect development of muscle without brutality and of grace without fat, style neither strained nor relaxed, neither ascetic nor luxurious. Swift is probably the greatest; he is the one of whom it can most confidently be said, that he has no devices that can be mimicked. And here two reservations may be made. One is that a deliberate attempt to *return* to the style of any author or of

any period, however accomplished, must always produce an effect of insincerity even to the writer's injustice. Lytton Strachey's style, of course, had little to do with the eighteenth century: it was a derivative from Macaulay; but in some of the writing of Mr. David Garnett, and even in some of that of the late F. S. Oliver, I seem to detect a consciousness of the style of an earlier period which operates to their disadvantage. And my other reservation is that the eighteenth century alone will not teach us how to write in this period, our own and very different. The interests of the eighteenth century were comparatively limited, its problems comparatively simple. It is unlikely that our age will develop a characteristic common style: our individual interests, and points of view are too divergent; our education indeed is so chaotic that no two persons in the same company can be assumed to have their minds stocked with the same furniture; you cannot make a quotation or an allusion to which the whole of any company can respond. Yet it would be to our interest if it could be our own age, rather than the eighteenth century, which would provide for us the norm of English prose.

For some subjects we have to go outside the eighteenth century to find the standards by which to test the accomplishment of our time. There is new subject-matter, as of science, and there is old subject matter, such as theology, in the treatment of which that age gives us very little guidance. In theology we must go back to Caroline times. *Anglicanism*, an anthology of the theological literature of that period, edited by Dr. P. E. More and the Revd. F. L. Cross (S.P.C.K.) gives an admirable selection of such writing, much of it almost inaccessible.[3] I do not pretend that the writers of this period were *classic*. It is the period of Hobbes and of Clarendon, a period of heavy Latinised prose and lumbering clauses. Yet the prose of these writers – and I do not mean the best, like Andrewes and Hooker, or the worst, like Thorndike – has something which I miss in nearly all of the theological writing of our own time. We usually get either a frigid philosophical dexterity, or an emotional slop; whereas in the Carolines, in general, intellectual acuteness and warm feeling are equally united. I am not here considering the matter for its technical interest, but for its bearing on the problem of style. Here are two passages, one from a more obscure Caroline, and the second from a conspicuous contemporary of ours; I believe they were both educated at Cambridge.

> As I am persuaded of an infinite and independent Essence, which I term a God, and of the mystery of an eternal generation by which

> that God is a Father, so I assure myself that Father is not subject to infirmities of age, nor is there any weakness attending on the *Ancient of days*; but, on the contrary, I believe Omnipotency to be an essential attribute of His Deity, and that not only in respect of operative and active power . . . but also in regard of power authoritative, in which I must acknowledge His antecedent and eternal right of making what, and when, and how He pleased, of possessing whatsoever He maketh by direct dominion, of using and disposing as He pleaseth all things which He so possesseth.[4]

> Man is a product of Nature – an emergent in the Divine scheme. Civilised man is the highest emergent of which we have knowledge. I take it then that in him we see, at the highest level we can reach, the end to which the unity behind Nature is tending. If we denote this unity behind Nature by God, we find God's purpose most fully displayed in the evolution of civilised man. The qualities which in our civilisation we are perforce developing, and finding increasingly valuable, are those which God has desired to bring into existence. They are the clearest indications we can get of His nature.[5]

It will not surprise the reader to learn that the author of the second of these extracts has also composed an essay on "Commerce as a Service to the Community," in which he has enunciated the revolutionary proposition that "No human being is a mere machine."[6] But I do not need to take apart these two passages, or ponder the choice and meaning of particular words. Neither, in itself, is a very distinguished piece of writing. But the first has the material for good prose and the second the material for bad prose; the first is clear and definite and handles words with the touch of a man who is not afraid of words, like a man who is not afraid of horses, because he knows them; the second is evasive and with an eye always directed to the possible lines of retreat. Unless I have been very unjust in my selection of passages, the comparison is disturbing to any complacency we may feel about the mental and spiritual health of our time.

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. TSE's signed copy of Read's *In Retreat*, Criterion Miscellany – No. 8 (London: Faber, [1930]), first published by Hogarth in 1925, is in the Houghton. He described the book to

his mother on 13 June 1926 as "a very impressive account of part of his war experiences. Although a very quiet and retiring man, he received two decorations and was several times mentioned for gallantry in action, and got his captaincy, so he knows what he is talking about. He is more important to me than any of the other men connected to *The Criterion*" (*L3* 188-89).

2. Walter Bagehot (1826-77), English businessman and author, was editor of the *Economist* (1861-77) and author of *The English Constitution* (1867). Sir Henry Sumner Maine (1822-88), British scholar of law and history, was appointed as the first Professor of Historical and Comparative Jurisprudence at Oxford in 1869. TSE referred to his *Ancient Law: Its Connection with the Early History of Society and its Relation to Modern Ideas* (1861) in "The Beating of a Drum" (1923) (2.471).

3. *Anglicanism: The Thought and Practice of the Church of England, Illustrated from the Religious Literature of the Seventeenth Century*, compiled and edited by Paul Elmer More and Frank Leslie Cross (London: S.P.C.K., 1935). TSE would have printed an article by the Anglican scholar Frank Leslie Cross (1900-68), Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity at Oxford, had it not been "too theological" for the *Criterion*, as he wrote to him on 11 Nov 1935.

4. John Pearson, *On the Creed*, better known as *An Exposition of the Creed* (1659), quoted in *Anglicanism* (245-46). Theologian, Anglican priest, and later a bishop, Pearson (1612-86) studied at Queens' College, Cambridge, before being elected a scholar of King's College, Cambridge, in 1632.

5. Ernest William Barnes, Bishop of Birmingham since 1924, Anglican modernist and outspoken opponent of Anglo-Catholicism, studied mathematics at Trinity College, Cambridge. This passage is taken from his essay "God," collected in *Should Such a Faith Offend? Sermons and Addresses* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1927), 292-93. TSE mentioned this book as an example of "popular theological works by Anglican clergy of the liberal school" in "Religion without Humanism" (1930) (4.38).

6. *Should Such a Faith Offend? Sermons and Addresses*, 239

A Commentary

The Criterion: A Literary Review, 14 (July 1935) 610-13

As the appearance of this number will almost coincide with the seventieth birthday of Mr. William Butler Yeats, the occasion appears suitable for a few retrospective observations upon Mr. Yeats's contributions to English poetry in the past, as well as his importance in the present.[1] This is not the place for a critical discussion of his work, which would require close analysis, but for an appreciation of his services and an expression of gratitude.

The poets of the group in which Mr. Yeats, as a junior member, first appeared, had several virtues which were not so conspicuous in the following poetic generation in England. They were men whose classical scholarship was of importance to them; and they tended to be cosmopolitan in culture. Yeats did not have the scholarship of Lionel Johnson – a brilliant scholar and a man of learning – or even that of Dowson; nor the saturation in French culture of Arthur Symons. But besides being an Irishman, he had a lively curiosity about possible influences. Whatever may be said of the poetry of the nineties, it cannot be accused of in-breeding. Johnson, for example, wholly English by family and thoroughly English in his poetic style, chose to associate himself with the Irish revival, so that he has even been supposed by some to have been of Irish origin. It is much to be regretted that several of the finest poets died young, and others failed to continue their development; but it is more important that Mr. Yeats survived to maintain, so far as one man can do, their tradition and to develop his own work.

With the disappearance of this group, and perhaps even before it, Mr. Yeats appeared to withdraw from metropolitan life in his pre-occupation with the Irish Theatre. Yet Mr. Yeats in Dublin performed as great a service to English literature, and belonged as much to it, as Mr. Yeats in London. There are two aspects in which this statement is true. For one thing, the Abbey Theatre kept poetry in the theatre; and maintained literary standards which had long since disappeared from the English stage.[2] If there is ever a dramatic revival in England in our time, it will owe a great deal to what was done in Dublin, however different may be the material, the ideas and the style. As I have said, I am not here writing criticism, and am not

concerned with praising or analysing Mr. Yeats's dramatic work; the insistence is upon its historical importance, and the importance of a movement in which Mr. Yeats played the chief part. And secondly, I believe that the future vitality of English literature will depend very much upon the vitality of its parts, and their influence upon each other.

This point deserves a little elaboration. It is not a matter of indifference that poetry written by an Irishman, a Welshman, a Scot, an American or a Jew should be undistinguishable from that written by an Englishman: it is undesirable. The poetry of Isaac Rosenberg, for instance, does not only owe its distinction to its being Hebraic: but *because* it is Hebraic it is a contribution to English literature. For a Jewish poet to be able to write like a Jew, in western Europe and in a western European language, is almost a miracle; and for different reasons and in different degrees it is also difficult for the other people I have mentioned.[3] It is not a petty question of employing one's native Doric, which is merely a nuisance, except for an occasional word or phrase which may enrich the English language; it is not a question of being sentimental about the old homestead and the landscapes of childhood. What is essentially Scottish about Dunbar is not his vocabulary; and what is essentially American about Walt Whitman is not his admiration for New York or for the vast size of his country. What is essential is impossible fully to define, but it is most effectually expressed through rhythm. It is something which can best be expressed, and most successfully maintained, through poetry. And poetry of this kind may have a fertilizing effect upon *English*: and fertilization, either from its own relations or from foreign languages, is what it perpetually needs.

In his *literary* Nationalism therefore, Mr. Yeats has performed a great service to the English language. His poetry, in his latest and greatest period, has tended to divest itself of the more superfluous stage properties of Ireland, and is perhaps all the more Irish for being unaffectedly so. There is a rhythm, an intonation, a way of making the simplest statement in the fewest and barest words, which belong to Mr. Yeats and to no one else. His influence upon English poetry has been great and beneficial; upon Irish poetry it seems to me to have been almost disastrous. And if my general remarks above hold any truth, this is just what you should expect. For a great English poet to have a good influence in England, he must be considerably removed in time: for a literature can be fertilized by its own earlier periods as well as by contemporaries from outside. The Irish poets must shift for themselves, and no doubt another generation will, if it does not

care to apply to other departments of our common language, find foreign influences to suit it. Ireland certainly owes Mr. Yeats a debt of gratitude, but no nation owes its great poets a debt of gratitude for their influence upon their immediate successors.[4*] England's gratitude to him is without this reservation, for his influence, wherever apparent, has been wholly salutary.

Of the absolute greatness of any writer, men living in the same period can make only a crude guess. But it should be apparent at least that Mr. Yeats has been and is the greatest poet of his time. Thomas Hardy, who for a few years had all the cry, appears now, what he always was, a minor poet.[5] I can think of no poet, not even among the very greatest, who has shown a longer period of development than Yeats. At no time was he less out-of-date than today, among men twenty and forty years his juniors. Development to this extent is not merely genius, it is character; and it sets a standard which his juniors should seek to emulate, without hoping to equal.

T. S. E.

NOTES

1. Yeats was born on June 13, 1865.

2. The Abbey Theatre grew out of the Irish Literary Theatre (1899), the Irish National Dramatic Society (1902) and the National Dramatic Society (1903). It opened in the converted Mechanics Institute in Abbey Street, Dublin, with performances of plays by the directors from 27 to 31 Dec 1904, including Yeats's poetic dramas *On Baile's Strand* and *Cathleen ni Houlihan*, Lady Gregory's *Spreading the News*, and John Millington Synge's *In the Shadow of the Glen*. TSE was to give the first Yeats Memorial Lecture, "Yeats," at the Abbey in June 1940 (6.78).

3. TSE first called attention to the poetry of Rosenberg in "A Brief Treatise on the Criticism of Poetry" (1920): "Let the public . . . ask itself why it has never heard of the poems of T. E. Hulme or of Isaac Rosenberg" (2.202). Rosenberg had been on TSE's mind since mid-May, when publisher Ian Parsons of Chatto & Windus invited him to write a preface for its edition of Rosenberg's poems, an invitation he had regretfully to decline on the grounds that Faber policy discouraged him from writing prefaces for the books of other publishers. TSE was presently negotiating for the inclusion of poems by Rosenberg in Michael Roberts's *The Faber Book of Modern Verse* (1936).

4*. TSE's note: "I know that apparent exceptions will leap to the reader's mind: the Elizabethans, Racine to Corneille, Pope to Dryden. But we are here in the midst of a common tradition, not exposed to the influence of a single man. The better one knows Racine and Pope, the more one is filled with admiration of their greatness in being so little influenced by their great predecessors. The influence of Milton in the eighteenth century was deplorable."

5. See TSE's extended discussions of Yeats and Hardy in *After Strange Gods* (5.34-36, 5.40-42).

This England!

To the Editor of *The Church Times*

The Church Times, 114 (30 Aug 1935) 206

Sir, – Canon Iddings Bell, in his article in your last issue, made several mistakes of approach.[1] He made two generalizations not really necessary to his main point, and therefore distracting. There is as little use in saying that the English are complacent as there is in the equally common remark that the French have bad manners.[2] If you live long enough in France, you cease to consider French manners bad; and if you live long enough in England, the assertion that the English are complacent ceases to have any meaning. Different nations have different manners and different complacencies. Second, the assertion that the English people is becoming "devitalized" is open to question and to interpretation. Visitors to France now get a similar impression of that country; and it is open to question whether the devitalization of England and France is not preferable to the galvanization of Germany.[3]

I think, however, that Canon Iddings Bell had a serious point to make, which deserved serious consideration; and I regret that your leading article chose for comment what was unimportant in his essay – and adopted, if I may say so, a manner which was almost calculated to substantiate his charge of complacency.[4] Canon Bell expressed his doubts as to whether Catholicism was gaining ground in this country; he is a regular visitor who makes a special study of religious conditions here; and I submit that his apprehensions deserve better than to be ignored. To me, at least, his warning seems salutary and by no means over-stated. You suggest that he does not understand the English. Very likely, but that does not disqualify him when he criticizes the condition of the Church in England. *Ne nous félicitons pas*.[5] I could not say more without claiming several columns.

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. Bernard Iddings Bell, "Is Anglo-Catholicism Conquering?," *The Church Times*, 114 (23 Aug 1935), 192. At this time, TSE was writing letters to help Bell, an American Episcopal clergyman, find a Church position in England.

2. Among the "five reasons" for Iddings Bell's assertion that "the promotion of the Catholic Church in England is possibly more difficult than in any other part of the modern Western world," one was that "the English are still a complacent people, perhaps the only complacent people left in a world of violent upheaval in respect of statecraft, economics and morality. . . . That complacency constitutes a difficulty . . . because for the most part, in the past couple of centuries, the estimates of man and society on which England has built its life have not been Catholic, but Protestant."

3. Another consideration behind the difficulty of promoting the Catholic Church in England, Iddings Bell wrote, is "the general apathy of the English common people. . . . [T]o any outside observer the deterioration since the war is sure to seem startling and ominous. . . . The deadly industrialism of a century has devitalized them."

4. In an editorial of 23 Aug, titled "We Can't Be As Bad As All That," editor Sidney Dark asserted:

> Dr. Iddings Bell loves England, but England has, to an extent, fooled him. . . . History justifies the English in expecting to muddle through. . . . But complacency is certainly not his mood today. . . . Everywhere there is an increasing determination that something shall be done. . . . England is puzzled, not complacent. But, though puzzled, she keeps her head. She will not run after the strange gods of the Fascist and the Communist.
>
> Again we entirely disagree with Dr. Bell that there has been a serious deterioration in the national character since the war. . . . But the odd thing is how often the Englishman remains the captain of his soul.
>
> It is because of what the English are and not because of what they are not that they so badly need the guidance and the consolation of the Christian religion. And we entirely agree with Dr. Bell that an immense responsibility rests with Anglo-Catholics never to rest or sheath their swords until the life of this England be sweetened and quickened by the faith once delivered to the saints. (189)

5. *Trans:* Let us not be pleased with ourselves.

Should There Be a Censorship of Books?[1]

New Green Quarterly, 1 (Autumn 1935) 197-200

This is the title for my remarks which was assigned to me, and I do not cavil at it. If you make inquiries of the Home Office, concerning the publication of a book in which you are interested, you will be told that there is no censorship in this country. That is literally true. Our Censor is any private subject, or common informer, who can find a magistrate to agree with him; and his censorship is only exercised after a book has been printed and published.

I shall not attempt to touch the question of political censorship, but only the question of moral censorship. The two questions are often confused. There are many persons who assume that anything subversive of the political order is "immoral," and there are many whose test of "immorality" is whether it is something subversive of the existing political order. Whether the political order is better preserved by morality or immorality is not my problem. The preservation of the political order is obviously something too important to be left to the common informer and the magistrate. I shall confine myself to the question of the moral effect of books which have no apparent bearing upon politics and economics; a question which for many people resolves itself into that of sexual morality – but I shall not insult this audience by assuming that its notion of morality is limited to sexual morality. This question alone is so complex, and so far-reaching, that I shall be satisfied if, within my twenty minutes, I can show how complex and far-reaching it is.

The present situation is unsatisfactory from two points of view: from that of the Christian and from that of the publisher. The two points of view are not so completely incompatible as they may at first sight appear. In fact, if there is one point upon which the Christian and the publisher can agree, it is that the present situation is unsatisfactory. I have even known publishers to regret that there is not a Censorship of Books.

Let me put a hypothetical case. Let us suppose that there was a book which I regarded as a great work of art which any publisher should feel honoured to have his imprint upon, and that this book contained certain words not commonly used in middle-class company of both sexes, and

contained passages dealing with subjects not usually discussed in such company. Let us suppose also, in order to illustrate a further complication, that this book had been previously published in another country, and that any copies of the foreign edition brought into this country had been ordered to be confiscated by the Customs. Let us suppose that with the lapse of time this book had come to be recognized as a great work of art; and that so many copies had been smuggled into this country that no person with any pretence to literary knowledge and taste could admit, without shame, that he had not read it. I go to the Home Office, the official custodian of morals, to ask whether I may or may not publish that book in England. I am told, with all courtesy, that I am perfectly free to publish it. There was never anything to prevent me from publishing it. As for the Custom House, that is, in some way which I do not understand, independent of the Home Office: the Customs may confiscate books, but they cannot forbid their publication in England. But, of course, if I publish the book, I must understand that I do so at my own risk. The Home Office cannot prevent, and has no desire to prevent me from publishing it; but neither has it the power to protect me when I have published it. I am at the mercy of any Briton who sends a marked copy to a magistrate, if the magistrate agrees with the informant that the book is obscene. Being still perfectly free, I have the opportunity to appeal. But unless I have a couple of thousand pounds or more which I can spare for the purpose – and a publisher's capital is usually fully employed – I shall not risk an appeal. For my appeal will be to legal authorities who, however eminent on the bench, however distinguished for learning and for integrity, will not necessarily be moral theologians or sages. In the present state of affairs, it is safer to publish the book which makes vice attractive, than the book which makes it repulsive. And in publishing a book which I believe to be highly moral but which offends the prejudices of a magistrate, I get the worst of it, I cannot even be sure in advance what the penalty may be.[2] I may only suffer the cost of printing the book, or I may have a fine imposed, or I may, perhaps, go to gaol. And what is still worse, if I publish a book which I fear may be condemned, I am never safe. There is no statute of limitations. It is nobody's business to prosecute me for publishing that book, but it is *anybody's* business. Some years after I have published it, after I have sold out the edition, after – if it is not a very important book – I have forgotten that I published it – a stray copy that has lingered on the shelf of a remote bookseller may fall into the hands of the person who will be the common informer. What I have just been

saying will make clear what I meant when I said that sometimes even publishers regret that there is not a Censorship of Books.

I said at the beginning that the problem is complex and far-reaching. At this point I might observe that the trouble springs from the separation of morals from theology. I believe that the proper basis of morals is revealed religion and the theology of revealed religion. Morals which is merely prejudice and habit has two weaknesses: it is frequently shocked by that which is highly, austerely moral, and it just as frequently fails to be shocked by what is highly immoral. Shock, of course, is an emotional, not a rational affair. I am sometimes shocked by books which shock other people, but when I analyse my feelings, as with *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, I find that I am not shocked for the same reasons.[3] And I am constantly shocked by books which run no risk whatever of the common informer and the magistrate.

I should like to amplify what I have just said: that the proper basis of morals is revealed religion and the theology of revealed religion. There is the danger of another kind of morals which is not mere prejudice and habit. The totalitarian state, at least ideally, imposes a strict moral rule against immorality which is "anti-social." For instance, homosexuality might be visited with heavy penalties – and in consequence books apologizing for homosexuality[4] – by states which aimed at breeding the greatest possible number of bayonets: contraception might be discouraged, and an exuberant domesticality encouraged for the same reasons. I am sure that you would agree that those who do the right deed for the wrong reason are to be kept at a greater distance than those who do the wrong deed. I will quote again a remark by an English totalitarian which I have quoted in another context: *[I]n our morality the one single test of any moral question is whether it impedes or destroys in any way the power of the individual to serve the State*.[5] I quote it, not against the individual who made the remark; but because it might become, quietly, implicitly, the assumption of all who rule the state – and who will not commit the mistake of stating, even of thinking, so clearly as the person quoted, that sentiment.

To return to my subject, although I do not admit that I have departed from it. There are two alternatives, apparently: and one is to have no censorship at all; to allow any book to be published. What about that?

Well, for one thing, much as I dislike our present kind of censorship, I could not regard with equanimity the breaking of all barriers. There is such a thing as "pornographic literature"; and I am sure, whatever one thinks of some of the periodicals displayed in little shops, and of some of the novels

sold in big ones, that if there were no prohibition at all, things would be unspeakably worse.[6] Publishing firms of the best class would work under a great disadvantage. The actual sense of public morality may be merely the shadow of virtue, it may blindly condemn the good and consent to the bad, but it is better than none at all. And on the other hand, the ideal censorship seems to me at present impossible. I have already said twice, that the problem is complex and far-reaching. The problem of censorship of books is a branch of the problem of Church and State. I don't think that it helps us very much to appeal to the Index of the Roman Church.[7] It seems to me that the Index was conceived to fit the problems of a very different age from ours. It was primarily designed to combat theological heresy. It was not designed for an era of novel-readers. In an age in which you have a small reading public, interested in ideas, you can warn your public against heretical ideas. In an age to which the word "heresy" means nothing, what can you do? The ideas which you condemn in those who express them directly, are conveyed indirectly and even unconsciously by a score of novelists who do not know what they are doing. Opinion to-day is spread not by persuading people to change their minds, but by assuming that their mind is so: not by drawing conclusions, but by taking for granted. An Index may catch the big fish, but a thousand little writers swim through the meshes.

To conclude. If you are to make up your minds about the Censorship of Books you must first make up your minds about the Relation of Church and State. You must avoid the Scylla of theocracy and the Charybdis of totalitarianism. As a publisher, I should sometimes like to be told by the State what I might publish and what I might not. As a Christian, I should sometimes like to be told by the Church what I might read and what I might not. But the only practical measures that I should like to see taken would be in the direction of having some final and responsible authority to decide whether any book to which objection has been taken, is really a menace to public morals; and such decision ought to be possible without unreasonable risk or expense to publishers. I should also like it to be recognized that with the passage of time a book which has become recognized as a work of art may cease to be a menace to public morals: so that the prohibition may be reconsidered from time to time, and in some cases revoked. Beyond this, I think that the Christianization of the country, and the education of taste to receive the good and to recognize and reject the bad, is the really important problem. I cannot imagine any form of censorship, however stringent, which will not be likely to suppress some things

that are fine and to let pass a great many that are pernicious; or which may not trespass too far on the liberties of the individual.

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. Note added by editor of *New Green Quarterly*: "This address was read by Mr. Eliot at the GREEN QUARTERLY Luncheon Club on July 9th."

This first club luncheon took place at Gatti's (Adelaide) Restaurant, King William Street, Charing Cross between 12:45 p.m. and 2:15 p.m.; it was chaired by Father Maurice Child, Secretary of the Church Union, and attended by more than seventy people. TSE's first protest against censorship, in Mar 1918, addressed the American context in "Literature and the American Courts" (1.675). TSE had addressed British censorship issues in his *Criterion* "Commentary" for Apr 1930 (4.90).

2. In a brief notice in the *Manchester Guardian* of 10 July ("Book Censorship / Mr. T. S. Eliot on the Need for Some Control"), the reporter paraphrased this and another sentence below in quotations: "Under the present state of affairs it is rather safer to publish a book which deals pleasantly with vice than a book which makes it repulsive. In publishing a book which may be highly moral, but which offends the prejudices of a magistrate, no one can be sure what the penalty may be" (5).

3. In his review of John Middleton Murry's *Son of Woman: The Story of D. H. Lawrence* (1931), TSE quoted a passage from *Lady Chatterley's Lover* and stated: "I should like to be sure that it shocked Mr. Murry, as a confession, as deeply as it shocks me" (4.317). In his letter of 8 July 1931, TSE wrote to Murry in this regard: "You speak of having been just as much shocked by the passage from *Lady Chatterley's Lover* as I am, but having come to see the whole matter from a further point of view beyond good and evil. I still cannot see how the point of view beyond good and evil can affect one's opinion of the rightness or wrongness of a specific instance of human behaviour of this sort." In 1960, TSE expressed his readiness to appear and was deposed as a witness for the defence in the obscenity case brought against Penguin Books for printing an unexpurgated edition of the novel.

4. TSE likely refers to Radclyffe Hall's lesbian novel *The Well of Loneliness* (1928), which he defended against censorship in "A Commentary" of Oct 1929 (3.746).

5. TSE quoted this passage from Sir Oswald Mosley's "The Philosophy of Fascism" in "Religion and Literature" (1935) (5.227).

6. In the *Manchester Guardian*: "Much as I dislike this state of affairs I cannot regard with equanimity the absence of any control. I regret to say that there is such a thing as pornographic literature. Whatever one thinks of periodicals in little shops or some novels in big shops, if there were no risks in publishing things would probably be a very great deal worse" (5).

7. The *Index librorum prohibitorum* (List of Prohibited Books) was a list of publications prohibited by the Roman Catholic Church. The first version was issued by Pope Paul IV in 1559 and revised until the final edition was published in 1948. It was officially abolished in 1966.

Views and Reviews [III]

The New English Weekly, 7 (12 Sept 1935) 351-52

Some remarks made not long ago by the Poet Laureate, in awarding a prize, have recurred to my mind in another context. I have not the newspaper report by me, but I think that his words were to this effect. When he was young, he said, he believed that the elder and established poets were either indifferent or hostile to the efforts of younger men, and he accordingly returned the appropriate feelings. Now that he is an elder poet himself, he knows that this is not true, and that older men wish only to encourage, advance and applaud the best work of their juniors. I believe this to have been the sense of his words.[1]

Such a general statement can bear with a little qualification and analysis. It may be more true at one period than at another, according to the general state of poetry and the personalities involved. I am now old enough to recognise a qualified truth in what Mr. Masefield said: that is, I am sure that all elder poets *believe* that they wish to encourage and help younger ones, they *believe* that they really care for poetry, and not merely for what they write themselves. And they can really crave the pleasure of being able to enjoy and applaud work of younger men. Only, their capacity for appreciation of anything new is apt to be very limited. Unless they are highly self-critical, unless they have kept their minds very conscious and supple, they are likely to be able to enjoy nothing but imitation of their own work. They do not know that it is imitation. It is easy enough to detect imitation of other men's work: it is extremely difficult to detect imitation of one's own. On the one hand, a man is anxious to find something to like; and on the other hand he dislikes the difficult and unfamiliar; and the two motives conspire. No poet can enjoy what he knows to be an imitation of his own work, or can take any kind of pleasure from this flattery. But he is liable to have settled himself in a state in which he can enjoy nothing but his own work, and nobody wants to realise this fact about himself. Hence an imitation of one's own work, which one enjoys because it reminds one of one's own work, but which one fancies to be highly original, is what gives the maximum of pleasure at the slightest cost of pain and effort and humility. Moral obliquity and intellectual sloth make a happy union. There is almost no escape from

this darkness if a poet has got to a stage in which he merely imitates himself; he has a better chance of clear vision if he is perpetually rejecting his own work, passing through the phase of being embarrassed and ashamed, to become able to regard it almost as detachedly as if it were not his, and to interest himself solely in that part of his work which he has not yet written. In any case, to take an intelligent and helpful interest in the work of younger men is not the simple operation of benevolence that Mr. Masefield might lead us to suppose.

No simple amiability will avail. To be interested in one's art, instead of being merely interested in one's own success – even in the best meaning of the word "success" – is no innate faculty which one either possesses in some degree or does not possess. It is a faculty which, however endowed with it one may be in the fresh years, must be cultivated to the end. To an age not much occupied with moral askesis, which is taught that it is more important that the growing plant should not be *warped* than that it should be *trained*, and which is not even taught that growth itself should be the activity of a lifetime, and not merely of arbitrarily restricted "formative years," this suggestion of the profound moral problem involved in what appears such a simple manifestation of good-nature as being kind to young poets, may appear fantastic. And even when I say "moral problem" I suppose I must say what one ought to be able to take for granted, that the moral and the intellectual cannot be separated, and that mental sloth is sin.

At different periods, of course, there may be greater or less sympathy between the older writers and the younger. What the help and encouragement of men of an older generation may be like, what it feels like, what useful stimulus or perhaps misdirection it may give, I do not know. At a time which may be symbolised by the figures 1910, there was literally no one to whom one would have dreamt of applying. One learnt something, no doubt, from Henry James, and might have learnt more. But Henry James was a novelist, and one who gave the most formidable appearance of exclusive concentration on his own kind of work. As for other writers then rising to celebrity, and who to-day constitute the older, in distinction to the middle generation, they lived in another world altogether. One did not read them. It is only within quite recent years that I have felt any curiosity about them, and still more recently that I have been able to recognise their merits. I can admire and survey the prose style, the theatrical skill of Mr. Shaw, and several of his plays seem to me to be masterpieces. In Mr. Wells's early work I find a magnificent imagination, and a type of imagination

given to no one else so fully, a vast if superficial view of the physical world.[2] With Mr. Chesterton I naturally have sympathies which I did not have twenty-five years ago, and an increasing respect and regard for a man who has been, in every respect but as a man of letters, fighting against the current.[3] And yet all these men seem to me to have other affinities with what is second-rate in our time, and with what is financially successful, rather than even wrongly influential. Mr. Wells bequeaths nothing to the writer of imaginative prose, Mr. Shaw leaves nothing to the dramatist, Mr. Chesterton leaves nothing to the critic. They all belong to a final stage of individualism, an age in which there was no society. Let us hope that the next generation of men of letters will be able to co-operate towards the creation of a society – or if you prefer, a community: and I do not mean by a common political programme, either, but by their devotion to their art because its life is a part of the life of society.

The relation between one generation and another is, I have said, a much more difficult and complicated matter than Mr. Masefield's words might encourage us to think. The helping hand is all very well; but you can only help those with whom you have the important thing in common – the devotion to the particular art or craft. And to be helped by the wrong people is a misfortune; so I do not think that my generation was really unfortunate.

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. John Masefield awarded the king's medal for the best volume of verse published in 1934 to the twenty-three-year-old Laurence Whistler. *The Times* summarized his speech: "When he had been young and beginning to write . . . he had a feeling that all the elder poets were leagued in some iniquitous band against the hopes and aspirations of youth, and that it therefore behoved every young writer to attack the elderly wherever it was possible, and that the only pleasure attaching to literature was mixing a poison bowl for one's elders. 'I am afraid I took part in the mixing of a good many poison bowls, but as I grew older I began to realise that the older poets were not banded together in a conspiracy against the younger, but were rather giving aid to the practice of an art which is very dear to them'" (*Times*, 3 July 1935), 11. TSE entered two volumes by Stephen Spender into the competition.

2. In "The Idea of a Literary Review" (1926), after listing a group of books that represent ideals of Classicism and Reason, TSE sets against them another group, "which represent to my mind that part of the present which is already dead," including Wells's novel *Christina Alberta's Father* and Shaw's play *St. Joan*: "Between these writers there are many and great differences, as between the others. And they all have their moments: at one point in his novel Mr. Wells lapses from vulgarity into high seriousness; at two points, if not more, in his long

series of plays Mr. Shaw reveals himself as the artist whose development was checked at puberty" (2.765).

3. Chesterton fought against a number of contemporary currents: he opposed the tide of secularism with orthodox Christianity; he objected to progressive historiography, especially as espoused by H. G. Wells; and he was a proponent of distributism, an economic philosophy based on the principles of Catholic social teaching, which affirmed the right of all men to own property. In "Political Theorists" (1927), an omnibus review that included Hilaire Belloc's *The Servile State* (1912; 3rd ed. 1927) and Chesterton's *The Outline of Sanity* (1926), TSE wrote that "One has much sympathy with the Belloc-Chesterton gospel of Distributive Property" (3.139).

Although TSE was in general agreement with Chesterton's politics and theology, he was deprecatory of Chesterton's literary taste and ability. His first mention of Chesterton appears in "In Memory of Henry James" (1.648), where he is critical of Chesterton's *The Victorian Age in Literature*: "Mr. Chesterton's brain swarms with ideas; I see no evidence that it thinks" (1.650). In "Verse Pleasant and Unpleasant" (1.679), TSE writes: "I do not care to pose as a champion of Tennyson, and Mr. Chesterton's approval makes one uneasy about him" (1.679). And in "Observations," TSE remarks: "I have seen the forces of death with Mr. Chesterton at their head upon a white horse" (1.711). TSE frankly admires the "delightful fiction" of Chesterton, but he deplores its limitations as "deliberately and defiantly, Christian" (5.221).

A Commentary

The Criterion: A Literary Review, 15 (Oct 1935) 65-69

On the leader page of *The Times* newspaper for August 14th is a very interesting account of what is called a "lost" tribe, but might as well be called a "found" tribe, of Papuans of unknown Asiatic race, dwelling in a fertile valley protected, or hitherto protected, by high mountain ranges.[1] This singular people, unlike any other hitherto discovered, failed to make any demonstrations of joy at the advent of Australian explorers, who unexpectedly found themselves in a situation more usual in Europe or North America, namely, "starving in the midst of plenty." "By gestures the natives ordered the patrol to be gone," says the Australian correspondent; and the leader of the "patrol" himself remarks: "the treatment meted out by these people was the worst I have experienced, for they did not act through fear or food shortage."[2] Yet they were mostly friendly, which shows an intuitive grasp of a principle not overtly recognized in Europe: that the better two peoples become acquainted, the more cordially they dislike each other, and that the best way to preserve friendliness is to keep one's distance. These Tari Furora, as they call themselves, have other characteristics which distinguish them from Europeans and North Americans: for they have a remarkable interest in afforestation, and they live not in towns or villages, but in "park-like farms," each family having its separate habitation. Again, "every acre appeared to be under cultivation,"[3] which indicates the absence of grouse moors and deer forests.

What is of more immediate interest than the discovery of this backward race, is the leading article which *The Times* devotes to comment on the report of its Australian correspondent. *The Times* is actually concerned about "the possibility of preserving this self-contained and apparently happy community from the disasters which usually overwhelm primitive peoples brought into contact with Western civilization."[4] It perceives that the financial and industrial system of the civilized world may bring disaster to people who at present are "producing all they use for themselves." Now, one does not expect the leader-writers of *The Times* to be themselves leaders; one does not expect them to be voices in the wilderness, one does not demand of them that they should be ready to be stoned in Jerusalem. One

expects *The Times* to be the voice of the people, of the twopenny public. So when *The Times*'s first reaction to the discovery of a new race of possibly 100,000 souls is one of apprehension of the harm that it will suffer from civilization, we may assume that there are many thousands of enlightened readers who not only share that view in secret, but are willing to hear it expressed in public. And this is a remarkable thing; for it indicates a lack of confidence in our civilization which is widespread and which must be pretty recent in history. It indicates also, no doubt, an increased sense of responsibility toward inferior races. I would not belittle the latter: yet I feel that the lack of confidence in our civilization is a good deal stronger than the sense of responsibility. For after all, there is nothing in the *Times* leader to cause panic among those men of enterprise who may be anxious to spread the benefits of exploitation among the Tari Furora. *The Times* does not really hope for more than the preservation of some decencies of behaviour. We may be about to eat up the Tari Furora, but we must not gobble. "In the end" says the leader-writer,

> the Tari Furora will lose, it is to be feared, everything which their isolation has hitherto preserved for them. . . . Sooner or later their discovery must mean the end of their idyllic self-contained existence. It may be later rather than sooner, for Sir Hubert Murray, the Lieutenant-Governor of Papua, is a man of wisdom and understanding . . . [H]e has, on the whole, been loyally supported by successive Australian Governments. Strengthened by this support, he may be trusted *to do what he can* (italics mine) to protect the Tari Furora from disintegrating interference.

But *why*, we ask, are these disasters inevitable? Why should we take for granted that all we can do is to delay them? I am not horrified so much by the prospect of the future for the natives, black as that may be, as by the prospect of the future for *us*. For if we are so helpless in the hands of our "civilization" that we admit our inability to prevent it from ruining Papuans, what hope have we of saving ourselves?

There is internal evidence to show that the two other leading-articles on the same page of the same issue of *The Times* were written by other hands than that of the elegist of the Tari Furora. For while the latter is aghast at a future in which this simple folk will buy "ploughs and machine-made tools and factory clothing and tinned food and gramophones and wireless sets," the writer of the article next above, who was detailed to celebrate the National Radio Exhibition,[5] is exultant over the prospects of that industry.

"Better and cheaper listening," he says, "is within the reach of most, for the new sets have relatively few valves and are most economical to run from the electric mains, and many people who have managed with old receivers now for some years might well consider whether they should not scrap their old-fashioned model and buy an up-to-date one."

The Times, of course, would never suggest that any reader should buy anything; it merely stimulates his mind by provoking him to *consideration*. And how pleasant it is to think that wireless sets have so improved!

The writer of the first leading article also does not seem to have in mind the same considerations as the champion of the Tari Furora. He is concerned with the Abyssinians, a people already so hopelessly entangled in European civilization as to be in a very different, and much more advanced position, than the inhabitants of Papua. Abyssinia has apparently reached the point at which it should be possible to forward the interests of everybody, both Abyssinians and foreigners. For "there is a hope . . . that changes should be made in Abyssinia which will both raise the social conditions of the country and recognize those of the commercial and economic claims of Italy to which previous Agreements with the Ethiopian Government give her some title."[6]

Well, I believe that there are higher civilizations and lower ones, and that it is possible for a higher race to help to raise the social conditions of a lower one – and to keep it on a higher level so long as the support is maintained. Of course, a good deal of damage has been done in the past by at least one European race assuming that it was qualified to "raise the social conditions" of a people that it did not understand, but I will let that pass. I will not deny that some parts of the world have been well administered by Europeans – but, I suspect, with advantage chiefly so long as the "commercial and economic claims" of the European governing race were nonexistent. The concept of Empire is not necessarily an ignoble one, whatever the *Daily Express* thinks about it: the notion of extending law, justice, humanity and civilization – with no other interest than glory, and no other motive than a sense of vocation. But in the present state of things, the glory of the administrators is quickly followed, if not accompanied, by the ignominy of exploiters. How many lower peoples have been, on balance, really helped by European intervention? And until we set in order our own crazy economic and financial systems, to say nothing of our philosophy of life, can we be sure that our helping hands to the barbarian and the savage will be any more desirable than the embrace of the leper?

I suppose that I am a defeatist. This suspicion had not occurred to my mind until it was implanted and confirmed by a writer in *The Modern Churchman*, a few days ago. It is not a very recent issue of *The Modern Churchman*: it is dated January-February 1935; but I am not a modern churchman myself, and the spring comes slowly up my way. The Rev. J. C. Hardwick, M.A., B.Sc., says that the Intellectuals are in retreat.[7] He uses the term "retreat" in the military, rather than the religious sense, although the two meanings appear to have something in common for him and that something derogatory. His company of Intellectuals is miscellaneous, and holds all the views that he disapproves of, whether these views are consistent or not. I am not surprised to find myself mentioned with Mr. Alfred Noyes as "these two modern poets," because a clergyman absorbed in being a modern churchman can hardly be expected to be careful of other meanings of the word "modern." Nor am I really astonished to find myself in the company of Berdyaev and Bergson, two quite different philosophers with whom I am not aware of having much affinity. It is pleasant to find Plato and Mr. Christopher Dawson by my side in the line of retreating intellectuals;[8] not so pleasant to be told that I have had "an unhealthy influence upon the cultural underworld" [636]: that is to say that under my protecting wings has grown up *Buchmanism*,[9] which is to be an ally of fascism – though on the other hand the intellectuals "imagine that they can prevent war, for example, by preaching pacifism" [637]. And I and my queer associates behave in a way than which "nothing is more sinister and more cowardly and indolent" [636]. I do not feel that I am any more indolent, in writing this commentary, than the Rev. J. C. Hardwick in writing an article of about the same length for *The Modern Churchman*. But if you can say, as does Mr. Hardwick, "*when the facts of human life became visible, as they have done in the last twenty years . . .*" [635; TSE's italics] then I suppose that the people who thought that they had been visible for a great many years before that must seem very indolent folk.

For Mr. Hardwick – I only take him as a common type of verbal zealot – the intellectual is a person who repudiates reason, and at the same time evades moral tasks. One moral task surely is to endeavour to make a more patient analysis than Mr. Hardwick has made; another to make a more coherent synthesis than our newspapers encourage us to make; a third to accept no palliative for a local malady without endeavouring to find out what is wrong with the whole body; another to find out by what principles men ought to be moved, and another to acquaint ourselves with men's actual

motives. It is those to whom the facts of life have only become visible in the last twenty years, who can be surprised at the situation to which we have come.

T. S. E.

NOTES

1. "A Lost Tribe of Papua / Exploration in Wonderland / Asiatic Traits / By our Australian Correspondent," *The Times* (14 Aug 1935), 13-14.

2. "Tribe Without Villages / 'Park-Like Farms' / From our Own Correspondent," *The Times* (14 Aug 1935), 14. The eight-month patrol that discovered the Tari Furora tribe in the southern, Papuan quarter of New Guinea, was led by Jack G. Hides (1906-38), assistant resident magistrate of the Australian dependency (as distinct from the portion of the island then controlled by the Commonwealth under a League of Nations mandate) administered by the Lieutenant-Governor, Sir Hubert Murray (1861-1940). TSE freely intermingles quotations from three separate reports in the *Times* of 14 Aug. Hides's government report was revised and published in Glasgow by Blackie as *Through Wildest Papua* (1935).

3. "A Lost Tribe of Papua," 14

4. "An Oasis in Papua," *The Times* (14 Aug 1935), 13

5. "Better Listening," *The Times* (14 Aug 1935), 13. The BBC's tenth exhibition at Olympia, under the auspices of the Radio Manufacturers' Association, "displayed there all that is newest and best in the way of wireless receivers and their accessories, although it is surprising . . . that television exhibits are so inconspicuous."

6. "A Mission for Peace," *The Times* (14 Aug 1935), 13. The leader describes the arrival in Paris of Anthony Eden and Sir Robert Vansittart "to find an amicable settlement of the Italo-Abyssinian dispute": "Mr. Eden may be trusted to do all that is possible to reconcile such Italian claims as are admitted to be substantial with the tenets of the League [of Nations] and the political integrity of Ethiopia. What he cannot do . . . is to give the consent of this country to a simple return to the law of force and condone the resort to war as an instrument of national policy which Signor Mussolini is contemplating."

7. "The Intellectuals in Retreat," *The Modern Churchman*, Nos. 10 & 11 (1935), 631-37. The Anglican theologian J. C. (John Charlton) Hardwick (1885-1953), of Partington Vicarage, Manchester, had been recommended to TSE in a letter of 25 Jan 1930 by H. D. A. Major, editor of *The Modern Churchman*, to whom TSE had written to ask for names of Anglican intellectuals who might contribute to the *Criterion*. Major described Hardwick, a longtime contributor to *The Modern Churchman*, as "excellent in reviewing theological & philosophical & ethical books where they take modern science into account" (*L5* 68n). Hardwick did not review for the *Criterion*.

8. A main figure of attack in tracing the flight from liberalism and humanism, TSE is associated by Hardwick with numerous modern counterparts who embrace original sin, tradition, authority, and discipline as the "passwords to intellectual respectability": he finds the Russian religious philosopher Nikolai Berdyaev (1874-1948) so disillusioned with humanism and liberalism that there is "no reason why we in England should follow his example. . . . Then there is the very able Roman Catholic writer and propagandist Christopher Dawson. . . . He

preaches a return to discipline and authority. Then we have the Anglo-Catholicism of Mr. T. S. Eliot and the Roman Catholicism of Mr. Alfred Noyes [1880-1958]. These two modern poets began life as agnostics" (631).

9. The American Lutheran evangelist Rev. Frank Buchman (1878-1961) founded the Oxford Group, a Christian evangelical movement for youth in 1921. "Under the shadow of Mr. Eliot," writes Hardwick, "and doubtless repudiated by him, Buchmanism grows up. . . . Buchmanism is an 'escape,' and its ultimate destiny is to be an ally of fascism. Groupism is an attempt to sidetrack the generous ardour of youth. But it is only because the intellectuals are in retreat that such follies are possible" (636).

Errata

To the Editor of *The New English Weekly*

The New English Weekly, 7 (10 Oct 1935) 440

Sir, – May I ask your permission to inform your readers that the author of *Scotland: that Distressed Area* is Mr. George Malcolm Thomson, not Mr. George Malcolm Thomas? I should also like to point out, for the benefit of Mr. Heppenstall and others, that Mr. Louis MacNeice spells his name Neice.[1]

T. S. ELIOT

NOTE

1. The anonymous reviewer of *Scotland, That Distressed Area* (1935) by George Malcolm Thomson misspells his name "George Malcolm Thomas" in the *NEW* of 3 Oct (417). In his article "Poetry," the British writer and BBC radio producer Rayner Heppenstall (1911-81) misspells Louis MacNeice's name "MacNiece" throughout (416-17), as does Herbert E. Palmer in his letter to the editor entitled "Louis MacNiece" (419).

Pacifism

To the Editor of *The New English Weekly*

The New English Weekly, 8 (31 Oct 1935) 58

Sir, – It is an obvious principle of controversial writing that one should direct one's attack at the enemy, and not shower blows indiscriminately upon bystanders, some of whom may be sympathisers. One should know whom one is attacking. One may have several enemies; but when these enemies are not allied, there is nothing to be gained by attacking them at once. I make these remarks with a view to the contribution to your last number by Mr. C. H. Norman.[1] I read what he had to say with a good deal of sympathy until I reached the words:

> The organized force of society is one of the most remarkable pieces of bluff which has ever controlled human affairs. Its principle is as false as the supernatural basis of religion. [30]

I think that he ought to have said *that* instead of *which*: but that is not the point. I think that if religion has no "supernatural basis" it has no basis at all: but that is not the point either. Nor is my point that I object to Mr. Norman's attacking the supernatural basis of religion. People who believe in the supernatural basis of religion are used to seeing it attacked; and I feel no annoyance with Mr. Norman for attacking it. But Mr. Norman's interesting article is not about the supernatural basis of religion; it is about something quite different, and his reference is an irrelevance. When I read the preceding part of his article, I assumed that it had some significance even for those who believe in the supernatural basis of religion. Mr. Norman makes it clear that he repudiates such people.[2] I suggest that he is making a mistake, and that he is weakening the expression of a conviction, by reinforcing it with a prejudice.

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. C. H. Norman, "Pacifism and the War Mind," *NEW* (24 Oct 1935), 29-30. Clarence Henry Norman (1886-1974), journalist and political activist, reviews *We Did Not Fight* by various

authors, *Peace with Honour* by A. A. Milne, discussed by TSE in "Notes on the Way [II]" (5.159), and *The Power of Non-Violence* by Richard B. Gregg.

2. Norman continues: "it will continue to exist only so long as the masses of the people are foolish enough to continue to be taken in by this gigantic confidence trick" (30).

Views and Reviews [IV]

The New English Weekly, 8 (7 Nov 1935) 71-72

The art of the occasional or periodical commentary is one to which I have given some attention, and I know enough of its difficulties and failures to be, I think, some judge of its success. It is an art which, if practised at all, must be practised sedulously, regularly and often. The ideal commentator must be attentive to current events, with an amused attention to the *faits divers*,[1] as well as to the headlines, and must be sensitive to the symbolic importance of the petty, as well as to the insignificance of the sensational. He should enjoy the bioscope of contemporary history as a spectacle, and at one moment criticise events with fixed principles and convictions in his mind, and at another illustrate some principle from some passing object of notice. I have known two accomplished commentators in my time: Charles Whibley and A. R. Orage;[2] and I mention them together not in order to compare them, for to compare two such different men would be to the advantage of neither, and would be irrelevant to both; but as a reminder of the great possibility of variety in this one form.

I am not going to write a review of Orage's *Selected Essays and Critical Writings*: first, because I know enough about the art of the commentator to know that it is not the art of the review. Too many persons called upon to comment have used the subterfuge of a slightly trimmed-up review. And second, because this book is not a collection of Orage's writings solely in this kind; the editors appear rather to have tried to choose Orage's most substantial critical writings, and therefore include some things which have not the form of which I am talking. His memories of Katherine Mansfield, for example, or his essays on Love and Religion, are outside my scope.[3] Impressive as the book is, it does not, for my present purpose, supersede Orage's own *Readers and Writers (1917-1921)*, published by Allen & Unwin in 1922. Nevertheless it contains a good many specimens of the kind of writing I mean; and one of the readiest examples is the passage on page 14, headed "The Style is the Man." It is a note on something that Augustine Birrell has said about Burke; and in exactly four pages Orage manages to say something worth saying about Burke and something worth saying about Birrell; and the two things are perfectly united, because it is Birrell that

enables Orage to say what he has to say about Burke, and Burke that enables him to say what he has to say about Birrell. You cannot say that he is talking about one rather than the other. It is a remark of Birrell's about Burke that gives the opportunity.[4] Burke of course is a writer who will always be worth talking about; but it is a rule of the commentator's game to find the topical excuse for talking about the permanent. Birrell was a figure of some interest in his time, but the really first-rate commentator does not talk about the merely topical. Orage is able to tick off Birrell by what the latter says about Burke; and in so doing, not merely is able to give his remarks about Burke immediacy, but is able to make Birrell the subject of something worth saying.[5]

One kind of contrast in commentary may be obtained by skilful sequence of widely differing subject matter, with a preference for the unexpected. This was not Orage's method; and the space at his disposal for commentary purpose in one weekly issue did not make this method possible. But a reading of his successive "Readers and Writers" shows that versatility, and ability to surprise by pouncing here or there at will, which the able commentator possesses. He could talk of Longinus or the *Mahabharata* with the enthusiasm that most journalists are only able to display about some paltry contemporary; and of everything with that tone, which I much admire, of one who has discovered these things for himself.[6] This gave a freshness at the time, and it is a freshness which has not faded. How instantaneously one distinguishes between the observation of a man who has adopted a view second hand, and of one who has found it for himself; and how fresh the observation of a man who has found a thing out for himself, *even if* many other men have found it out before! When Orage remarks that the style of Swift was founded on that of Demosthenes, and that of De Quincey on Cicero, we stop to ask whether it is so, because we believe that it is Orage's own opinion; whereas the assertions of many writers are too obviously unoriginal to arouse question.[7]

Another valuable trick of the commentator, which Orage knew how to use, was the criticism of something from an unexpected point of view. One is impressed by his pre-occupation with the problem of style: by which he means, quite rightly, prose style. I say, quite rightly, first because he was a prose writer, and second because an understanding of the qualities of prose style is presupposed in an understanding of verse style. One cannot read the verse of Pound or Marianne Moore without feeling that they have studied prose style to the benefit of their verse – not *necessarily* to the benefit of their prose. The majority of verse writers are contented with

approximation to meaning: an approximation which in many contemporary verse writers takes the deceptive form of a thumping scientific precision – which turns out on examination to be a precision of something else. This absorption in the problem of prose style helped to provide Orage with the means for detecting humbug. His analysis of a passage of writing by the military critic of *The Times* goes much further than mere correction of writing – as any good analysis does: merely by tearing to pieces the flimsy web of words he provides an implicit criticism of a state of mind (page 41 ff.).[8] And this interest in prose style is a most important merit of the commentator. There were things outside of Orage's interest, no doubt; but an interest in style such as his, is fundamentally an instinct for distinguishing the genuine and the bogus. And for distinguishing them with refinement: witness the subtlety, the fairness, the restraint, of his judgments upon such writers as Chesterton, Shaw and Bennett. He judges these men not with the prejudice of the moment, but as impassionately as he judges Sterne, and Swift, and Bolingbroke as stylists.[9]

Orage himself was a good prose writer; he seems to me to have had one of the best prose styles of our time. It was natural and unaffected: but it was also extremely studied and conscious, as his occasional comments upon his own note-books evidence.[10] He had the mind that picked up the good word or phrase, and used it when occasion served. And he had what seems to me the completing virtue of the commentator: one feels even in his comments that he is not merely the *professional* commentator; that he had main directions, but combined concentrated interest with general curiosity: which combination gives his scattered or periodical comments both an interest of detail, and the interest which comes of their having their place in a pattern formed by directing interests; and whether we agree in the conclusion, we ought to be able to concur in the direction.

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. *faits divers*: minor news stories; news in brief

2. A. R. Orage founded the *New English Weekly* in Apr 1932 and edited it until his death in Nov 1934. TSE wrote an obituary note for him in the issue of 15 Nov 1934 (5.146).

3. A. R. Orage's *Selected Essays and Critical Writings*, edited by Herbert Read and Denis Saurat (London: Stanley Nott, 1935), features the essays "Talks with Katherine Mansfield" ([125]-32), "On Love" ([193]-203), and "On Religion" ([207]-16).

4. Orage begins his discussion of the two men by quoting a postscript by Augustine Birrell (1850-1933), English politician, barrister, and academic, to his essay on Edmund Burke

in *Self-Selected Essays*: "When I wrote this," Birrell explains, "I had read Burke, but not a great deal about him; and the more you read Burke in his *Collected Works* the greater becomes your admiration; but the more you read about him . . . the harder it is to like him as much as I at least desire to do" (14).

5. Orage concludes: "It is clear that Mr. Birrell has failed to examine Burke the writer with anything like the seriousness with which he has examined him as a man" (16).

6. In *Selected Essays and Critical Writings*, Orage defines the *Mahabharata*, one of the major Sanskrit epics of ancient India, and the *Upanishads* as "world-classics that the world has simply not yet discovered" (70). The book also contains the piece "The Sublime Longinus" (24-27).

7. In "English Style" Orage argues: "On the whole, Swift followed the Greek tradition – exemplified by Demosthenes – while de Quincey followed the Latin – exemplified by Cicero. There can be no doubt of the school to which Swift belonged; his *Drapier's Letters*, for instance, were confessedly modelled on Demosthenes. Likewise there can be no doubt of the school which de Quincey attended; he learned his style of Cicero." *Readers and Writers*, 96.

8. "The Big Bow-Wows," *Selected Essays and Critical Writings* (41-45). Orage here critiques an article appearing in the *Times* of 15 Aug 1917, "The Vigil / A Visit to the Grand Fleet. / Better than New." The byline does not name the military correspondent, but Orage identifies him as Colonel (Charles à Court) Repington.

9. *Selected Essays and Critical Writings* features the pieces "Mr. G. K. Chesterton" (94-96); "Shaw and Reality" (103-10); "From *The New English Weekly*," in which Orage discusses Arnold Bennett's *Journals* (178-79); "What a Style Can Do to Letters," which considers Sterne's "conversational style" (45); "An Irish National Literature," in which Orage praises Swift's English for its "simplicity, strength and purity" (56); and "Bolingbroke" (70-71).

10. In "One Reader's Notebook" Orage reflected: "I have always carried a substantial notebook in my side pocket for extracts and reflections picked up in divers places and in sundry fashions." *Selected Essays and Critical Writings*, 18.

The Supernatural[1]

To the Editor of *The New English Weekly*

The New English Weekly, 8 (14 Nov 1935) 99

Sir, – The sentences given in Mr. Norman's letter which he says were omitted from his article as printed, do not seem to me to alter the situation in any way.[2] I thought that I made it clear in my own letter that I was not taking exception to Mr. Norman's views on the subject of the supernatural basis of religion, but merely pointing out that he was only injuring his own case by airing them in the wrong place. I wrote my letter because I have felt a good deal of sympathy with Mr. Norman's political views, and it seemed to me regrettable that he should go out of his way to alienate people of good will. I certainly did not write my letter merely to provide readers like Mr. Llewelyn Powys with a pretext for violent affirmations.[3]

Incidently, I wonder whether it is "generally agreed that no person has ever lived the Christian life according to the precepts of Christ except Christ Himself."[4] This may be generally agreed amongst some limited number of people, but I should have thought that at least a few of the greater saints had arrived at some approximation toward a Christian life according to the precepts of Christ.

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. The CC is dated 8 Nov 1935.

2. In his rejoinder to TSE's letter "Pacifism" (5.279), C. H. Norman clarified that "the article has been subjected to some editorial deletion owing to the exigencies of space. Most of the part struck out had reference to the topic dealt with in the sentence under criticism" (*NEW*, 7 Nov 1935), 80.

3. Llewelyn Powys (1884-1939), British novelist and essayist, stated in his letter, printed before TSE's: "If, as many of us hold, every religion that has its roots in supernatural assumptions is little better than a pathetic illusion, a pathetic nursery neurosis out of which the passing of the centuries will gradually persuade us, surely a writer may be excused for selecting as a kind of household illustration of 'bluff' so singular, romantic, and wilful a misconception of the human predicament as is offered to us by magical faiths" (99).

4. Quoted from C. H. Norman's letter of 7 Nov (80).

Stilton Cheese

To the Editor of *The Times*

The Times (29 Nov 1935) 15

Sir, – May I be allowed the pleasure of supporting Sir John Squire's manly and spirited defense of Stilton cheese? At the same time I should like to add, before it is too late, a few reflections on the project of a statue.[1]

I do not suggest for a moment that the inventor of Stilton cheese is not worthy of a statue. I only criticize the proposal on the ground of the transitory character of the result. Certainly, all the business of public subscriptions, speeches, broadcasts, the wrangling over designs, the eventual unveiling with a military band, and the excellent photograph in *The Times* – this is all exciting indeed. But once a statue is erected, who in this country ever looks at it? Even the work of Mr. Epstein is now so familiar to the common man that he no longer stops to ask what it is all about. In a few years' time the Stiltonian monument would be just another bump in a public place, no more inspected than the rank and file of statesmen, warriors, and poets.

No, Sir, if cheese is to be brought back to its own in England, nothing less is required than the formation of a Society for the Preservation of Ancient Cheeses. There is a great deal of work which such a society, and its members individually, could do. For instance, one of its first efforts should be to come to terms, by every possible persuasion, with the potteries which supply those dishes with three compartments, one for little biscuits, one for pats of butter, and one for little cubes of gorgonzola, so called. The production of these dishes could be stopped by a powerful organization of cheese-eaters. Also troops of members should visit all the hotels and inns in Gloucestershire, demanding Double Gloster. (On two occasions I have had to add the explanation: "it is a kind of cheese.")[2]

On one other point I disagree with Sir John. I do not think even the finest Stilton can hold the field against the noble Old Cheshire when in prime condition – as it very seldom is.[3] But this is no time for disputes between

eaters of English cheese: the situation is too precarious, and we must stick together.[4]

Your obedient servant,
T. S. ELIOT

FABER AND FABER, LIMITED,
24, RUSSELL SQUARE, W. C. 1.

NOTES

1. In response to Théodore Rousseau's regret at his being unable "to find one of your noblest products, the cheese of Stilton" during a recent visit to London (*Times*, 19 Nov 1935, 10), the English poet and editor Sir John Collings Squire wrote a defence of Stilton cheese in the issue of 25 Nov defining it as "the prince of all English cheeses" (8). Squire stated: "M. Rousseau wonders why we have not erected a statue of Stilton as the French have erected one to Mme. Camembert. We should certainly do it" (8).

2. Both Single Gloucester and Double Gloucester are traditional, semihard cheeses that have been made in Gloucestershire, England, since the sixteenth century.

3. Cheshire cheese is a dense and crumbly cheese named for the English county where it is produced. In "A Few Recollections of Eliot," Frank Morley recounts an after-lunch conversation with the cheese-waiter at the Oxford and Cambridge Club: "'There's a Blue Cheshire I've been saving for Mr. Eliot, Sir – if you and Mr. Eliot were to find it convenient to look in at half-past five, I judge that at half-past five it will be rightly brown.' Cheese at its moment of perfection was of pleasure to Tom, and when there was a troublesome matter, such as finding a right title for *Murder in the Cathedral* (which once found, sounds easy enough), a right dry sherry with a right cheese at the right minute might help." *T. S. Eliot: The Man and his Work*, ed. Allen Tate (New York: Dell Publishing, 1966), 112.

4. After TSE received numerous replies to this letter from readers, one from G. G. Coulton compelled him to write on 2 Dec "to answer yours in order to acknowledge your precedence as the originator of the project for a Society for the Preservation of Ancient Cheeses. If I should again express myself publicly on the subject I shall certainly make due acknowledgement. You will, I am sure, agree, however, that my own project is more comprehensive and ambitious than your own."

Audiences, Producers, Plays, Poets[1]

New Verse, 18 (Dec 1935) 3-4

It becomes much more difficult to find anything worth saying about dramatic verse, once you begin trying to write it. And theoretically, we should leave theory about contemporary drama until we have produced some contemporary drama to theorise about.

We admit that we cannot expect to produce a new dramatic literature until we have the audiences and also the producers capable of helping the poets to write for the theatre. On the other hand the producers are checked until they have enough dramatic repertory with which to feed and train the audiences. I believe that the deficiency of plays is more serious at present than the lack of producers or of possible members of audiences. We need not assume that the possible audiences represent one class rather than another, or one political tendency rather than another. So far as the dramatic artist is concerned "the people" is everybody except the present occupants of the stalls at the more expensive theatres.

In a period in which dramatic verse is the normal theatrical form we may suppose that a poet has better opportunities of learning to be a good playwright than he has to-day. But at any time it is probably more possible for a poet to learn how to write a tolerable play, than for a playwright to learn how to write tolerable verse. Yet the poet who starts to write plays, to-day, should not expect to turn himself into a *very* good playwright. He must learn to work hard at an unfamiliar task for which he probably has no native gift, and to learn when (as well as when not) to be guided by those who know the theatre better than he does. As he is attempting to do something new on the stage, he will inevitably theorise a little about what he is doing: but I think he will be wise to aim at the minimum, rather than the maximum amount of theory, and for the most part keep his theories to himself. That does not exclude him from communicating to his colleagues any practical lessons he learns in the course of his experiments.

The audience does not come to see what he does, in order to rally round a theory, but to be interested and excited. The indispensable merit of a verse play is that it shall be interesting, that it shall hold the audience all the time. And it will not do that, if the audience is expected to do too much of

the work. This is a very good exercise for poets, who seem to forget often that poetry, even to be readable, should be interesting.

Second, the interest should be one interest throughout, not merely a succession of interests, or of momentary surprises. The play should have form: it needs more form than an ordinary conversation piece; it must have "dramatic form" and also the *musical pattern* which can be obtained only by verse; and the two forms must be one.

Third: no models, only suggestions. Continual effort of self-criticism to find out what one can do and what one can't, to build one's form on one's strength. This is expecting of the dramatic poet only the self-knowledge of the successful boxer or tennis-player. To violate every precedent, and break every rule except those mentioned above, if that will help to exploit one's strength and render harmless one's weakness.

T. S. ELIOT

NOTE

1. TSE wrote to Geoffrey Grigson, editor of *New Verse*, on 3 Sept 1935: "I can see no harm in having a number about poets and the theatre. The great weakness is that so far there has been a great deal of talk about poets and the theatre and very little to show in the way of actual writing. I think that such a number ought to be late enough to include a critical examination of Rupert Doone's Group Theatre, both of the aims which Doone has and of the actual accomplishment in his autumn production. It would be a good thing for the Group Theatre to receive friendly but unsparing criticism. I think that such movements are apt to suffer from not getting enough of encouragement and intelligent criticism well mixed. I shall be pretty busy up to December, but I would gladly try to write a short note for you on some general point."

Cheese

To the Editor of *The New Statesman and Nation*

The New Statesman and Nation, NS 10 (21 Dec 1935) 977

Sir, – Mr. David Garnett (reviewing Mr. Osbert Burdett's book) is in error in supposing that there is no tolerable American cheese.[1] There is a delicious cheese of Port Salut type made by Trappist monks in Ontario.[2] But Trappist monks, like their cheese, are the product of "a settled civilisation of long standing," and I fear there is little demand for either.[3] Americans seem to prefer a negative cream cheese which they can eat with salad: and American salads are barbaric.

I wish Mr. Garnett would take the initiative in founding such a society as he suggests;[4] and I for one would be glad to buy a Double Cottenham, if he could put me in the way of it.[5]

T. S. ELIOT

Oxford and Cambridge University Club, Pall Mall, S.W.I.

NOTES

1. David Garnett stated that there is "no tolerable American cheese" in "Cheese," his review of *A Little Book of Cheese* (1935) by Osbert Burdett (1885-1936) in the issue of 7 Dec (902, 904).

2. Port Salut cheese is semisoft cheese made from cow's milk, first produced in nineteenth-century France by Trappist monks. The Canadian version, Oka cheese, was originally manufactured at a Trappist monastery in the village of Oka in Quebec, not in Ontario as TSE states. TSE later wrote to Stephen Spender on 15 Feb 1940: "The one thing I question is the advisability of letting the public know that we ate Port Salut, unless you go into the matter more fully and tell why. It is a good, reliable, transportable second-rate cheese, but there are only two reasons for eating it: (1) that one is feeling rather low spirited (2) that there is nothing better."

3. Garnett writes: "There is no tolerable American cheese either, and for the same reason; a settled civilisation of long standing is needed for making cheese" (902).

4. Garnett comments: "his book will have performed a very great service if it stirs up honest lovers of English cheese like Mr. Eliot and Sir John Squire to form a Society, not so much for 'the protection of Ancient Cheeses,' as Mr. Eliot suggests, as for co-operation in obtaining the best cheeses for its members, and for spreading a knowledge of rare cheeses amongst them" (902, 904). Garnett refers to TSE's letter to the *Times* of 29 Nov, in which he calls for "the formation of a Society for the Preservation of Ancient Cheeses" (5.286).

5. Garnett writes: "the best of all English cheese, Double Cottenham, is so local that Mr. Burdett has never heard of it, otherwise it would take pride of place between Wensleydale and Stilton in his book" (902).

Lord Victor Seymour

To the Editor of *The Church Times*

The Church Times (17 Jan 1936) 61

Sir, – We should be grateful if you would allow us to make in your columns the following announcement for the benefit of friends and admirers of the late Rev. Lord Victor Seymour outside of his own parish of St. Stephen's, Gloucester Road.[1]

The Parochial Church Council has decided on a memorial, which is to take two forms: an endowment fund and a screen before the Lady-chapel. The church, without an endowment, is in a precarious position, and may be more so in the future; and it is known that Lord Victor himself desired earnestly that such a fund should be raised. Those who knew him personally, wish also that his great services should be commemorated by a visible memorial in the church of which he was vicar for twenty-eight years. It is therefore proposed that a carved Gothic screen should be erected in the arch before the Lady-chapel. The screen would bear an inscription stating the sum of money raised in his memory for the endowment of the living.

Donations and promises of payments, either at one date or to be made in instalments during 1936, will be received either by the Churchwardens, St. Stephen's Church, The Vestry, Gloucester Road, S. W. 7, or by the Manager, The National Provincial Bank Limited, Cromwell, S. W. 7.

T. S. ELIOT,
A. A. WEST,
CHURCHWARDENS.[2]

NOTES

1. The Reverend Lord Victor Alexander Seymour (1859-1935) served as vicar of St. Stephen's Church from 1900 to 1929.

2. Although the letter is cosigned by Captain A. A. West, TSE was the sole author of the letter. On 9 Jan, he sent his vicar, the Reverend Eric Cheetham, Lord Seymour's successor, "a letter which I have drawn up to send to *The Church Times*. It is quite indifferent to me whether I sign it alone, or whether I sign it . . . with you and West; and I should be obliged if you would say exactly which you prefer." When Rev. Cheetham recommended that West be a signatory, TSE wrote to the editor on 10 Jan that "as my fellow churchwarden lives in the country, I have

signed for both of us in order to save time." TSE was elected a warden of St. Stephen's Church in 1934 and was vicar's warden at the time of writing.

On 4 Mar, TSE wrote to Godfrey Childe: "If your bookseller's client wants to pay £5.5.0 for four sheets of my manuscript he is welcome to them. In that event, would you please have the cheque made out to the National Provincial Bank Ltd., and crossed Lord Victor Seymour Memorial, and send it to him. If he thinks the price excessive, may I have the sheets back?"

A reply to Roland Burke-Savage's "Literature at the Irish Crossroads," University College, Dublin, 23 Jan 1936

On his first visit to Ireland from 22 to 26 Jan 1936, TSE was the special guest of University College, Dublin, as respondent, lecturer, interviewee, and playwright for the inauguration of the English Literary Society in Earlsfort Terrace. The opening address on Thursday evening 23 Jan was given by the Society's Auditor, Roland Burke-Savage, SJ, with an untitled response by TSE, who also proposed a "vote of thanks" for the speaker. The next day he delivered his formal lecture, "Tradition and the Practice of Poetry"; on the 25th he was interviewed for an Irish radio broadcast; on the 26th he attended a production of *Murder in the Cathedral* by the College Dramatic Society.

Avowing that there is "a legitimate place for an Irish literature in the English tongue," Burke-Savage argues that the present generation of Anglo-Irish writers, including Yeats, AE, Joyce, and others of whom he is highly critical, are members of "a non-Catholic clique" writing primarily for non-Irish readers. Quoting TSE's statements in *After Strange Gods* about the relation of tradition, orthodoxy, and personality, he points to the lack of a strong philosophical and moral tradition by the writers: "Separated geographically from England, they are in revolt against Ireland, which is essentially Catholic, by reason of their Protestantism." In the future, he declares, "Young Irish writers have only to steep themselves in their own traditional Catholic culture if they wish to give birth to a true Anglo-Irish literature. . . . Which of the ways shall Irish Literature go? We are at the Crossroads" (see textual note). The Proceedings were broadcast and were reported in the *Irish Times* of 24 Jan under the bylines "Literature at the Cross-Roads / College Society Paper / Views of Living Irish Writers."

So far as I am qualified to comment at all upon the subject matter under discussion, I am in agreement with the speaker on his main point, that the next generation in Irish literature has a new and difficult task before it, and that it cannot take its direction or its interests from the men who have made Irish literature in the last forty years.[1] Furthermore, there is a choice before the next generation, which is perhaps more difficult than that which any previous generation has been faced with, and which will demand the greatest effort of consciousness and conscience. And if one believes that in imaginative writing is expressed the consciousness of a nation and a race, this is a very serious matter. What I have to say in comment, will be first an attempt to qualify the rather drastic criticism of the last generation, that we

have heard; and second, an attempt to place the crisis here in relation to the crisis of literature everywhere, as I see it.

I should like first to pay my tribute of homage to the great work of Yeats. Of what he has done for Ireland I am not qualified to speak, but I know something about what he has done for poetry and drama in general. During the first years of the century, Yeats is the only poet whom I can remember who was doing any serious work in the English language at all. After the abortive movement of the nineties, England suffered from a poetic in-breeding which led to sterility; and America had produced nothing whatever since the death of Whitman. The poetry that Mr. Yeats produced during those years is not the work of his that I like best, but it was always the work of a serious craftsman; and just as he kept alive our hope of a poetic drama and a living theatre, so he maintained, for those who were able to recognise it, the tradition of living verse and the reality of an individual rhythm. If his work had come to an end twenty years ago he would still have performed a great service to letters. But Mr. Yeats's verse has, in my opinion, steadily improved and has been at every moment, so to speak, up to date. As an example of lifelong devotion to poetry, he illustrates, for the benefit of every poet writing in any language, the reminder that a poet should go on developing, making new discoveries and taking new risks, throughout his life.[2] And I venture to say that as Mr. Yeats has discarded much of the paraphernalia of pre-Christian folklore, and has adopted a more austere style, he seems to me to have become more Irish.

This leads me to one of the points raised by the speaker. I also regret that Yeats, like several of his distinguished contemporaries, came to poetry from a Protestant background. It is this background, it seems to me – and I do not hesitate to say it, because I have already said it in print[3] – which accounts for his wanderings among oriental philosophies and dubious mysticisms, journeys unsafe for any but the Christian, and which the Christian informed about the historic wealth of his Faith has least need to make. There was certainly a period [when] Anglo-Irish poetry tended to give readers abroad the mistaken impression that the Irish subsisted entirely on a diet of fairies. We do not want the same menu now; but I want to suggest that what those writers did was perhaps the only thing that they could have done, with their background and in their time; and that the positive achievement, seen historically, will outweigh the defects. I find, I confess, the type of mysticism of A.E. very unsatisfactory. But may it not be that these writers – if we consider their antecedents and conditions

– were keeping alive in poetry some essential element in Christianity – however imperfect and distorted – in an age in which the terms Catholic and Protestant had been for a long time involved in political issues and acerbities?

I have said that it seemed to me that Mr. Yeats, when he drops his apparatus of pagan mythology, seems to me to become more Irish than before. Is it not true that the great artist is the one that is both most representative of his people and is most appreciable by other peoples? He is not always the one most quickly appreciated abroad, but he is the one who survives. In a period when Irish literature was wedded to the movement towards political independence, it was perhaps natural for writers to pay attention to the surface of their work rather than to release what was most fundamentally Irish in them. The immediate effect of this abroad would be the popularity of something exotic. I know that the work of contemporary American writers which has the most immediate success in England is not necessarily the best, or even that which is most American – because you have to know America pretty well to know what is most American. The work which has the quickest success is that which presents vividly all the superficial differences between American and English life: it may be brutal and violent, it may be even pornographic, but it must be queer. I suspect that the reason why the novels of Mr. Sinclair Lewis – not that he is brutal or pornographic – had such a success in England and on the Continent, is that he presented American life as normally something ridiculously provincial, and thereby flattered the vanity of equally stupid, narrow, bigoted and provincial people in other countries.[4] Henry James, who knew his own Americans thoroughly, never had the same success anywhere.

There remains one great and lamentable isolated figure. James Joyce seems to me the most universal, the most Irish and the most Catholic writer in English in his generation. The spectacle of anyone educated in the Faith, who has subsequently lapsed from it or revolted from it, must always be a melancholy one; but we must distinguish here between a man and his work. The important thing in Joyce's work is not the author's conscious attitude towards his hereditary faith, but the fact that he has never been able to escape from it. Whatever he thinks of his education, and whatever its particular effect upon his temperament, his work is certainly an unconscious tribute to the kind of education he received – an education without which, I believe, he would not have achieved such eminence. The mind exhibited in the work remains profoundly Catholic and religious. This

aspect of his work is perhaps more conspicuous to an observer brought up in, or habituated to the secularised atmosphere of England or America. What is fundamentally sound in it, for those who are mature enough to find it, is Catholic. In an essay published several years ago I developed this point by a rather detailed comparison of a story in the volume *Dubliners*, called "The Dead," with stories by Katherine Mansfield, D. H. Lawrence, and Thomas Hardy. I am not here concerned with estimates of the native gifts of all these authors; only with the importance of the religious background. It is to this that the superiority of the story of Joyce is primarily due; and it is the inferiority in this respect that leaves the accomplishment of the others so largely a waste of great gifts in error and triviality.[5]

This consideration brings me easily enough to the speaker's final description of the cross-roads. He says "either literature can adopt as a working hypothesis the Anglo- or definitely English ideal: public order and discipline at all costs, but let the individual soul be what it will. Or else it can develop a truly Irish and Catholic ideal, this aims at the discipline of both the individual and the public but the individual comes first." Of this alternative, I naturally prefer the second. I am in agreement with the speaker in hoping that the future literature of Ireland will be profoundly and truly Catholic. But the first reason why I share this hope is, that I should like the literature of England and America and Europe to be Catholic as well. If the Catholic faith is the true one, may we not aspire towards a literature which is English and Catholic, as well as one which is Irish and Catholic? But there is a particular reason for hoping for a literature that is Irish and Catholic, sooner than that may be expected in England: Ireland has the inestimable advantage of a continuous religious tradition, which exists nowhere else where English is spoken. Might we not hope therefore that the production of great works of literature by men with the advantage of this long tradition, should reveal for Ireland a mission towards these other countries, near and overseas, which might not unfairly be compared with that of certain monks many centuries ago?[6]

I should be glad therefore to think that the Irish writers of the future should recognise that they had an obligation to perform, not only towards their own country, but towards the world as a whole, and towards the faith. I confess that otherwise, if literature does not take the Catholic road, I cannot see what function of importance Irish literature can have. It cannot be content either merely to provide local novelties for the English and

American markets, or on the other hand to become wholly in-bred, and provide something that will be read, if read at all, only at home. For every great literature is great by its influence abroad, as well as by its influence at home.

The issue is in one aspect that of finding expression for what is most truly Irish, and what is most truly Irish is, I believe, for you, also most truly Catholic. But Catholicism is more than the expression of it through the mentality and temperament of any one race. The crisis is not only in Ireland but everywhere; and in every country, I think, men of letters will be found working either for or against the right philosophy of life. The forces of secularism and temporal absolutism which are active everywhere are not to be met simply by a defensive policy, or by the endeavour to preserve the continuity of a simple piety. The Catholic Faith is that of the simple and that of the wise: and neither simplicity nor wisdom is very highly rated in the modern world. The most intense intellectual activity is required. A civilisation must do something for its poets if it is to expect much of them. The relations of Faith and Science, of Church and State, of the claims of the spiritual and of the temporal orders, the obligations of Christians in connexion with the problems of poverty, of the economic causes of war, and of all the evil in the world for which we are collectively responsible, have to be examined patiently and fearlessly by those who are competent to do so. Everywhere abroad we find efforts to provide education which shall be efficient without being Christian: we have to provide education which will be both efficient and Christian. In all these matters I should hope that Catholic intellectuals in Ireland should assimilate the best Catholic thought on the Continent, and with the addition of their own thought diffuse it for the benefit of those whose language is English throughout the world.

What we have to consider is not merely a crisis of literature, but a crisis of culture throughout the Christian world. In England the antithesis of Catholic and Protestant is becoming yearly less vital: the real antithesis of our time is between Catholic and pagan. I do not diminish the greatness of devotional art, when I say that what is needed to-day is not so much literature of devotion, which can only affect those who already believe, but literature which will illustrate the Catholic view of life because the men who produce it are so bred and educated – and I mean the education that they give themselves as well as that which is given to them – that they will see all

human problems from a Catholic point of view. We have not had such a literature in England for four centuries. I hope that we can look to you to help us.

NOTES

1. Roland Burke-Savage, SJ (1912-98), was then a student at University College, Dublin, where he was studying English literature, later graduating with a BA in 1936 and an MA in 1941. Though he is referred to as "Rev." in the program and in the *Irish Times*, Burke-Savage was only a vowed Jesuit scholastic at the time and not yet ordained as a priest. (In the Irish Province of the Society of Jesus, scholastics were addressed as "Mr." but were given the honorific "Rev." in print, even though they were not in Holy Orders.) He was later editor of the *Irish Monthly* (1947-50) and *Studies* (1950-68); author of *Catherine McAuley: The First Sister of Mercy* (1946; 1955); and college archivist and curator of the museum at Clongowes Wood College, where he had been a student.

2. TSE wrote in his tribute to Yeats on his seventieth birthday in the *Criterion* of July 1935: "I can think of no poet, not even among the very greatest, who has shown a longer period of development than Yeats. At no time was he less out-of-date than today, among men twenty and forty years his juniors. Development to this extent is not merely genius, it is character; and it sets a standard which his juniors should seek to emulate, without hoping to equal" (5.260).

3. TSE had written in his seventh Norton lecture, "The Modern Mind" (1933): "No one can read Mr. Yeats's *Autobiographies* and his earlier poetry without feeling that the author was trying to get as a poet something like the exaltation to be obtained . . . from hashisch or nitrous oxide. He was very much fascinated by self-induced trance states, calculated symbolism, mediums, theosophy, crystal-gazing, folklore and hobgoblins . . . but you cannot take heaven by Magic, especially if you are, like Mr. Yeats, a very sane person. Then, by a great triumph of development, Mr. Yeats began to write and is still writing some of the most beautiful poetry in the language" (4.679).

4. The American novelist and short story writer Sinclair Lewis (1885-1951) wrote about the self-satisfied and enclosed lives of small-town, midwestern Americans in such lucrative novels as *Main Street* (1920), *Babbitt* (1922), *Arrowsmith* (1925), and *Elmer Gantry* (1927), many of which enjoyed a publishing phenomenon abroad. In 1930, he became the first American writer to win the Nobel Prize in Literature.

5. TSE discusses Joyce's story with Mansfield's "Bliss" and Lawrence's "The Shadow in the Rose Garden" in *After Strange Gods* (5.29) and concludes: "We are not concerned with the author's *beliefs*, but with the orthodoxy of sensibility and with the sense of tradition, our degree of approaching 'that region where dwell the vast hosts of the dead.' . . . And the most ethically orthodox of the more eminent writers of my time is Mr. Joyce. I confess that I do not know what to make of a generation which ignores these considerations" (5.30-31). He subsequently discusses Hardy's "Barbara of the House of Grebe" as a story in which "we are introduced into a world of pure Evil. The tale would seem to have been written solely to provide a satisfaction for some morbid emotion" (5.42).

6. Beginning in 563 and continuing for a millennium, the Hiberno-Scottish mission spread Christianity throughout Europe. The Gaelic monks of Ireland and what is now western

Scotland extended their reach by founding monasteries in Great Britain, Iceland, and continental Europe as far as Vienna.

TEXTUAL NOTE

1. A mimeograph copy of Burke-Savage's nine-page typescript, "Literature at the Irish Crossroads," together with a program of the inaugural meeting of the English Literary Society on 23 Jan 1936, is in the Houghton Library: bMS Am 1691 (29). TSE's untitled, seven-page typescript with holograph emendations has been archivally titled "[Irish Literature and culture]" and is also in the Houghton: bMS Am1691 (28).

Tradition and the Practice of Poetry

TSE delivered this lecture on the afternoon of 24 Jan 1936 at University College, Dublin, following the inaugural meeting of the English Literary Society the previous evening. The public event was held in the College's largest lecture hall, with Dr. Denis J. Coffey, President of the College, presiding, and with loudspeakers set up in hallways for the overflow audience. The lecture was reported in the *Irish Times* of 25 Jan under the bylines "Originality in Poetry / Fertilisation of Literature / Views of Mr. T. S. Eliot" (6). The previously unpublished and untitled lecture was printed posthumously and edited by A. Walton Litz for a special Eliot issue of the *Southern Review*, in celebration of the 50th anniversary of the journal, 21 (Oct 1985), 873-88 (see textual note).

The title I have given is misleading.[1] What I shall really be concerned with is not primarily the relation of a literature to other literatures, but the relation of a literature to itself. What, in the practice of a particular art, such as poetry, do we mean by tradition; how does a local, national or linguistic tradition proceed? We must admit, to begin with, that the word "tradition" has a bad sense as well as possibly a good one. When we read, in a newspaper review or an obituary notice, that a poet has been "traditional in the best sense of the word," we are usually correct in inferring that the poet in question has been traditional in the worst sense of the word, that he has continued and vulgarised the faults or limitations of the last generation, that he has given people what they are used to, and therefore what they want; that he has aroused no excitement and caused no shock of delight or horror in anybody. In this sense, "tradition" means behaving exactly as the last generation did, in quite different circumstances. What I prefer to mean by tradition is something larger, something that includes the revolutionary as well as the submissive, and the reactionary as well as the revolutionary. There are times for doing one thing and times for doing another: the truly traditional poet will be submissive, reactionary or revolutionary according to his perception of the need of his time and place.

The perpetual task of poetry is to make all things new.[2] Not necessarily to make new things. It is always partly a revolution, or a reaction, from the work of the previous generation. Not necessarily all that is expressed in the consciousness of poets: a poet may be a good poet, the right poet for his time, and be either more or less revolutionary than he thinks he is: it is not

the business of poets to be completely conscious and prescient of what they are doing. A poet may have more in common with his immediate predecessors than he thinks he has, or he may have less. He may aim to say exactly the same things that they said, and his personality will make him say them in different rhythms, in different syntax, and the result will be more different than he knows. Or he may reject violently all the "ideas" of his predecessors, and in saying different things in the same rhythms he may prove to be merely saying the same things – so far as poetry is concerned. And only in historical perspective can we form any opinion as to what is going on. For we have to recognise, not only the reaction of each poet to his predecessors, but a dimly perceptible movement in cycles. In English Poetry, for example, we can distinguish so far, four periods. There is the period which includes Chaucer, Langland and Skelton – and I will say Dunbar: for although that great poet is definitely Scots and not English, yet he belongs to a pre-Renaissance versification period in which he is equally remote from [them],[3†] and similarly remote from us. In the sixteenth century, between Skelton and Spenser, occurred what is probably the greatest revolutionary movement that we have ever had in poetry in the English language. The great revolutions in poetry are revolutions in the sense of rhythm: the difference between Skelton and Spenser is greater than any difference since. The second revolution took place between the murder of Charles I and the return of Charles II: in reading Dryden's criticism one marvels as much at his understanding of Chaucer as at his lack of understanding of the age of Shakespeare, in spite of all that he failed to appreciate in Chaucer, and all that he was surprisingly able to appreciate in Shakespeare. Now, if in these matters one aimed to proceed according to the method of the day, which is called the dialectic method, one would be at this point inconvenienced. It would be easy to present Dryden as the antithesis of Shakespeare, but for the presence of Milton. As it happened, these two great poets took different ways, and for a time the way of Dryden seemed the right way. Unfortunately, the progress of poetry cannot be isolated from the progress of everything else, and it becomes involved with the development of various theological and philosophical ideas. The poetry of the eighteenth century is of two kinds, that descending from Dryden through Pope, and that descending from Milton. The evidence that the tradition of Dryden was the superior, is the work of Samuel Johnson. Nevertheless, it was Milton, rather than Dryden, who influenced the Romantic Age: the sonnets of Wordsworth, rather than the early couplets

of Byron. But whether Milton or Dryden was the more powerful, nevertheless, Wordsworth and Coleridge initiated a new age – not because their ideas were original, but because their rhythms were a departure from tradition. And the rhythms of Wordsworth and Coleridge, followed by Shelley and Keats, served for a good seventy-five years.

Let us then assume roughly that there have been four periods of English poetry: that before the age of Shakespeare, that of Shakespeare, that of Dryden and Milton, and that of Wordsworth and Coleridge which lasted until the present century. What is the present and the immediate future? We cannot, as working poets, be wholly aware of the historical position of our own generation: we have not the perspective for that; and I doubt whether it matters. What does matter is the presence or absence, in the literary generation immediately previous to our own, of a poet of great originality and power. We are better off, in some respects, in the absence of any such powerful personality. The immediate effect is liable to be rather stifling: a poet may influence his immediate successors so much that their work may be merely an imitation or an echo; and a beneficent effect will not appear until a generation appears which will have been influenced by that poet, if at all, so early in life that they have been able to assimilate him without damage to their own originality. And, as I have already said, a "tradition" is not kept alive by each generation following the steps of its predecessor. And for this reason literacy and wide reading becomes important. A poet cannot help being influenced, therefore he should subject himself to as many influences as possible, in order to escape from any one influence. He may have original talent: but originality has also to be cultivated; it takes time to mature, and maturing consists largely of the taking in and digesting various influences.

There are two ways in which a literature may be renewed – I mean two purely literary ways: for literature of course needs also to be constantly [responsive] to the changing world about it, as well as to the things which are always the same. The two ways of cross-fertilisation are by a new contact with an older period of itself, or by contact with a foreign literature: and I think that both are desirable. At some periods, as that of the Tudors, the fertilisation may come primarily, or altogether, from abroad: the influence of Italy was as important then as was the influence of France in the following century. Obviously, for both of these ages, the English literature of the late Middle Ages was too near to them to be of use, it belonged to a world from which they were still growing away; and from their point

of view, it was really crude and hardly civilised. In the formation of the Romantic Age, on the other hand, a taste for the Middle Ages was important: the Middle or late Middle Ages were remote enough to be of use; and the border ballads were taken seriously. The Romantic Age was chiefly an example of the self-fertilisation of a literature by an earlier period of itself; though at any time we may expect to find all sorts of influences. The best poetry of Byron, for instance, was written in a form which he took over from Italian poetry of the Renaissance.

I would remark at this point that it is not important – whether we are considering the influences upon a whole period or the influences upon an individual poet – that the literature exerting the influence should be perfectly understood. In any case, a "perfect understanding" of a foreign literature or of an earlier period of our own, is an unattainable ideal: sometimes the way in which it is mis-understood is the important thing. The fertilisation of which I am talking goes much deeper than the exact reception of ideas: just as we may be deeply influenced, in our private lives, by someone whom we understand very imperfectly indeed.

I am neither a scholar nor a philosopher, and I can perhaps be most useful in these matters in sticking to my own experience. I cannot help wondering how my own verse would have developed, or whether it would have been written at all, supposing that the poets of the generation of the 'nineties had survived to my own time and had gone on developing and increasing in power. Perhaps they were men who could not have developed further, but I am making that assumption. I certainly had much more in common with them than with the English poets who survived to my own day – there were no American poets at all. Had they survived, they might have spoken in an idiom sufficiently like my own to have made anything I had to say superfluous. They were in contact with France, and they might have exhausted the possibilities of cross-fertilisation from Symbolist Poetry (as they called it) before I had a chance. What happened was that they made it possible for me to discover these poets: Arthur Symons' book on the French Symbolists was of more importance for my development than any other book.[4] I must be grateful to him for putting me in touch with the work of the French poets, and for not having got out of them, for his own poetry, what I was to find there myself. When one reviews one's own writing, as when one reviews one's own life, how much there is that bears the appearance of mere chance! One has been dependent upon one's predecessors for what they did not do, as much as for what they did! The one poet

of that period, the youngest and the greatest, who survived, was of course Yeats; and it happened that in my own formative period Yeats was in his most superficially local phase, in which I failed to appreciate him.

I am the more inclined to refer to these personal facts because they seem to me to have some bearing upon your present situation here, which is at the back of my mind all the time. The general situation in Ireland is so different from what it was thirty years ago that it must give rise to a new poetic impulse. A revolution in poetry is not, of course, produced by the desire to be revolutionary; and I have sometimes feared that some of our younger poets in England might be so zealous in the political interests as to neglect the polishing of their verses. It is not produced by a negative impulse: the desire not to write like a previous generation. It is very apt to produce something which conservative people will at first decry as a betrayal of the tradition. My own verse, if I remember, was at first appreciated in England because it seemed very American, whereas in America it did not strike people as being American, but rather as being French: in neither place did it fit in to the "tradition." But when a new form of poetry has run its course and matured, then it may come to appear as something which fully enters into the tradition while enlarging it. A new school of poetry in Ireland might well seem to conservatives, at first, to be outrageously un-Irish; and would come to be recognised as Irish, only after it has gradually become evident that it is not anything else.

This brings me to another point. Are we to conceive of the situation with regard to poetry written in English to-day, as parallel to that of the Greek decadence, or that of the Roman Empire? Must we regard London as the centre, in the same way that Athens and Rome especially were centres; Rome drawing to it the gifted writers from all parts of the Empire? Historical parallels arouse suspicion if they are too neat. It is this parallel with the Latin language, I think, which has led people in America like Mr. Mencken to talk of "the American language" as if it were something that were bound to develop as far from English as modern French is from classical Latin.[5] The question is academic, so far as it concerns a remote future in which all spoken English will be so different from that of to-day as to be quite foreign: I doubt whether even Chaucer could extract much pleasure from our contemporary verse. It is important only in so far as it affects our attitude towards the present, so far as it inclines us to think of English as spoken and written in America and Ireland as colonial English. I think that this is an error. I think that the parallel with imperial Rome is true at the

moment so far as the British Dominions are concerned. I do not know of a single poet of the slightest merit in Canada, Australia and New Zealand, though I assure you a good deal of verse is written in those countries. And when a writer of exceptional merit and originality appears in any dominion, he tries to get to London. Katherine Mansfield was, I believe, a Tasmanian.[6] I know three poets of original merit who were born (of British stock) in South Africa, and they left that country as soon as they could. Whether these lands will ever arrive at distinctive literatures of their own is a question which lies in too remote a future to be discussed; certainly the fact that America has been a going concern so much longer than they has more significance than the mere time lag; because conditions are more unfavourable to the formation of new cultures in colonial lands to-day. But the important point for the present is this: that the few colonial writers of genius who have appeared, have brought to the English tradition nothing but themselves and their individual gifts, together with the imagery and feeling of their childhood in remote lands – that is, a certain exoticism. They have not produced a distinct and impersonal idiom, a separate and peculiar rhythm. Poetry provides a more delicate measure for deciding these differences than prose, for it is by the rhythm, the intonation, that the national or racial difference is most clearly detected.

I would say then that the situation of the English language is in a very important respect without any historical parallel. I believe that, as far into the future as the future concerns us, there must be three literatures in the English language, English, Irish and American; and I think that the possibilities of reciprocal influence might greatly fortify the vitality of the language as a literary medium, by giving it added means of cross-fertilisation which the French, German and Italian languages have not got. (I do not know Spanish, and do not know enough of the relations of Spain and Portugal with their South American offshoots to pronounce any opinion.)[7]

There is the difficult case of Scotland. The situation of Scotland has some very important differences from that of Ireland. In the first place, it must be remembered that Scotland – and wholly without English interference, it has always been so – is the home of two very different peoples and cultures, that of the Highlands and that of the Lowlands. It is within Scotland itself, and not in the relation of Scotland to England, that the problem of the Gael and the Saxon-Scandinavian exists. Secondly, the traditional language of the Lowland Scot, Scots proper, has had everything

against it in the struggle for survival. It is too closely allied to English to survive; it has to coalesce with English just as the three main branches of English had to coalesce in the Middle Ages. Indeed, it would have been better for Scots literature if it had been merged with English at the same time that one English language was being formed, for its valuable characteristics might have been preserved. A very slight acquaintance with the last eminent poet of the Scots language, Burns, shows that he could express a great deal that was racial in his Scots verse that he could not express in English. A Scot cannot write Scots poetry in English, he can only write English poetry. Yet Scots is not a dialect of English. For if one soaks oneself for a time in the best Scots poetry, such as that of Dunbar, or even the translations of Gavin Douglas,[8] [one] will recognise in it something that no English poetry gives, though it has a kinship to something in English before French and Italian influences modified it. Scots has a different rhythm, and the emotions are slightly different. In spite of the gallant efforts of Mr. Hugh MacDiarmid, with his "synthetic Scots," I doubt whether Scots can be re-established.[9]

But I mention the case of Scots only to make the point that it is not a parallel to the case of Irish poetry written in English. I have said that the Scot writing in English writes English poetry; but the Irishman writing in English does not write English poetry. I should even say that the American writing in English does not write English poetry. It is not the trying to be American or Irish that does it, nor is it the choice of local subject matter, fundamentally; it is the different rhythm in the blood. I can't explain this to people who have no ear for poetry; but there are people who have an ear for poetry, and yet cannot hear the difference because of obstacles which are capable of being removed. For instance, very likely none of you has read very much American poetry at a time; and when you read one poet, you may notice that his rhythms are different from those of any English poet you can think of, but you cannot distinguish between what is personal and what he shares with other American poets. Or you may be too much concerned with the superficial differences of imagery and syntax. I am not speaking of course of the poets in the colonial tradition, such as Longfellow, though I dare say that close attention even to these writers would detect the difference in a rudimentary form, but of Poe and Whitman and the poets of our own time. I have been assured by two or three sensitive critics that it is clearly present in my own work. I cannot tell myself, because there is a great deal one can never know about one's own work; just as one never

hears one's own voice; and just as, I assure you, it is very easy to see when a younger poet is imitating one of one's contemporaries, and almost impossible to detect an imitation of oneself. I am more aware of the difference negatively, in the English poetry which I fail to enjoy as I see English people whose taste I respect enjoying it. I suspect that there is a great deal of poetry which one can never fully enjoy unless one has been born and brought up in the country of its origin. Possibly I do not fully appreciate any English poetry subsequent to Samuel Johnson. On the other hand, I should maintain that it was at least a possibility that I was in a better position to set my finger on what is most universal in English poetry, because of my comparative inability to appreciate what is more provincial. I will admit, as an instance of my disabilities, that I cannot rate Gerard Hopkins so highly as most of my English friends do; although I like what he has to say much better than many of them, I still am put off by the way he says it. It strikes me as artificial, even affected and strained; fundamentally his metric seems to me to belong to the age in which it was written, and in several ways he seems to me very close to his contemporary George Meredith – another author whom I have never been able to make much of.[10]

Now this is a point which I should make quite as emphatically in London or New York as here: that English poetry, and Irish poetry, and American poetry, are at all times exposed to the danger of provinciality. You are, I hope, more aware of that danger here; for if you live in the biggest metropolis in the world, or among the tallest buildings in the world, you are apt to forget it. Indeed, every civilised country is in grave danger of provincialism to-day, with the closing of intellectual as well as economic frontiers. Modern English verse, for example, has a tendency always to decline into an ecstatic contemplation of peaceful landscape, without any distinguishable human figures, which I cannot share. For provincialism is not merely the absence of something, but the addiction to positive literary vice, and it is the endless task of men of letters to disturb the provincialism of their particular place and time.

In 1923, when "The Criterion" was founded,[11] it was my aim to find and to print work of the best continental writers of all nations, with some community of interests, though not a narrow or specialised one. For several years this attempt was, I think, moderately successful. Making allowance for failure on my own part, I have found this increasingly difficult. First, there seemed to be less and less from Italy; then less and less from Germany,

and with the exception of a few Catholic writers, whose position I believe is more and more precarious, the German mentality seems to withdraw farther and farther from Western Europe. And the French, for the most part, seem to be engaged in their domestic political concerns. I am not speaking at the moment of poetry, but of intellectual activity in general: there seem to be fewer and fewer writers who are speaking not only to their own countrymen but to Europe as a whole. If this is so, it must mean a great impoverishment of intellectual life through continued in-breeding, everywhere. We should therefore neglect no possibility of communication that remains open.

It is of poetry that I have been speaking, because poetry is the art, and is the part of literature, about which I can speak with the least diffidence. But I would remind you that poetry cannot flourish in an intellectual vacuum. It may be that the peoples of these northern islands are not so gifted for painting, sculpture, architecture, or music as some other races. But the art of poetry requires, if not the support of the other arts, the support of the other uses to which words are put. Far more than immediate appreciation, the poet needs to be surrounded by an atmosphere of intellectual activity, speculation and criticism. He needs to have men about him, not necessarily of his personal acquaintance, who are thinking. Poets of course vary considerably in their capacity for abstract thought; but I suspect that what is often held to be a capacity for abstract thought, in a poet, is a capacity for abstract feeling – something much more properly the poet's business. I have myself no capacity whatever for abstract thought, or indeed for any sort of thinking, so I may underrate the capacities of others. I should say that the achievement of Dante, for example, in either political philosophy or metaphysics, was less important than his ability to turn the scholastic philosophy of thought into something apprehensible by feeling.

I understand that a great mathematician gets an aesthetic joy out of a perfect demonstration; and I have no doubt that the thrill felt by St. Thomas in arriving at a metaphysical or theological demonstration needed for him no embodiment of sense; but most of us are not so constituted. To have realised the Christian scheme in poetry is what makes the poetry of Dante so very great: but he had to have the background of theology and philosophy in order to do it. I do not mean that a poet's business is merely to translate the current thought that he finds about him – no one who maintains the permanent truths of Christian dogma could do that, to-day. A poet may be wholly isolated in his generation, he may believe in nothing

that his age maintains, he may support everything that it denies; but he needs, whether to support or to deny, some intellectual currents about him. He may, it is true, be limited by these currents of thought. The philosophy of Locke was not very angelic food, but it served the eighteenth century better than nothing at all; the general ideas of the romantic period were confused and largely mistaken, and Wordsworth, Coleridge and Shelley and Keats might have been greater poets had they been surrounded by greater, more complete and more permanent ideas than those provided by French radicalism or English Toryism; but they were better off than if they had had about them no ideas at all. At the risk of being tiresome, I must repeat what I said last night, that a civilisation must do something for its poets if it is to expect much of them.[12] It must provide an atmosphere of living thought – which I should hope in Ireland should be living Catholic thought; and to do this it must keep in contact with the best that is being thought and written in other countries and other languages. English, Irish and American poetry may stimulate each other directly, and each may stimulate the others by assimilating some influence from another language; but they will not be there to stimulate each other unless there is going on, in each country, much intellectual activity which apparently has no relation to poetry. Individual poets feed on various mental provender: some aliment their minds from some subjects and some from others; but the varied nourishment must be there for them to choose from. And I would repeat, that of these three countries, Ireland seems to have a special vocation to keep in touch with the best Catholic thought on the continent.

NOTES

1. Litz noted that "this provisional title is based on Eliot's opening paragraph. The actual 'misleading' title probably concerned the relation of Irish literature to the literatures of England and America" (873). The editors have kept the provisional title, unbracketed, as given by Litz and approved by Valerie Eliot.

2. TSE alludes to Pound's translation, "make it new," from an ancient Chinese text describing the emperor Tching's use of it as an inspirational reminder: "Tching prayed on the mountain and / wrote MAKE IT NEW / on his bath tub / Day by day make it new / cut underbrush / pile the logs / keep it growing" (Canto LIII). The phrase became a maxim for modernist aesthetics; TSE had recently seen through the press the Faber edition of *Make It New: Essays by Ezra Pound* (1934).

3†. In typescript and *Southern Review*: us

4. Symons's *The Symbolist Movement in Literature* was published in England in 1899; TSE discovered the first American edition in the library of the *Harvard Advocate* in Dec 1908; there he read Laforgue, Nerval, Rimbaud, Verlaine, and Mallarmé; not until the third edition of 1919 were Gautier and Baudelaire included.

5. H. L. Mencken's *The American Language: An Inquiry into the Development of English in the United States* (1919) defended "Americanisms," slang, word coinage, and the grammar of spoken English in America as a more colorful and creative language than that spoken in England.

6. Katherine Mansfield was born in her childhood home of Wellington, New Zealand, in 1888. Though she was not from Tasmania – an isolated state off the south coast of Australia – several of Mansfield's stories in *The Garden Party and Other Stories* (1922) are set on that island. She moved to London permanently in 1908 and married John Middleton Murry, her second husband, in 1918. She died from tuberculosis in France in 1923.

7. TSE began taking Spanish lessons in May 1917 as an employee of Lloyds Bank. By October, Lloyds let him have all the Spanish financial newspapers for himself, and on 10 May 1918, he informed his mother, "I can read a Spanish newspaper pretty easily" (*L1* 263).

8. The Scots bishop, poet, and translator Gavin Douglas (ca. 1474-1522) is known for his *Eneados*, a Scots translation of Virgil's *Aeneid* (1513).

9. Hugh MacDiarmid's "synthetic Scots" poetry was an experimental vernacular style that he began to develop after 1922, synthesizing various forms of the Scots language in an attempt to create a standard literary Scots.

10. See TSE's discussion of Hopkins's metrical innovations in *After Strange Gods* (5.36-37) and his criticism of Meredith's style in "Studies in Contemporary Criticism, I" (1.760).

11. The founding issue of the *Criterion* appeared in Oct 1922.

12. TSE refers to his reply the previous evening to Rev. Roland Burke-Savage's talk on "Irish Literature at the Crossroads" at the inaugural meeting of the English Literary Society (5.293).

TEXTUAL NOTE

1. The fifteen-page original typescript, with TSE's holograph emendations, is in the Houghton Library, bound in a light blue paper folder: bMS Am 1691 (27), the gift of Emily Hale.

A Commentary

The Criterion: A Literary Review, 15 (Jan 1936) 265-69

The Criterion has never undertaken, but has rather avoided the discussion of topical political issues, however extensive. There are enough other periodicals, of every shade of opinion, which exist primarily for such discussion: discussion which in any case can be more adequately conducted in journals appearing at more frequent intervals. If – what is often doubted – there remains any place for quarterly reviews in the modern world, their task is surely to concern themselves with political philosophy, rather than with politics, and with the examination of the fundamental ideas of philosophies rather than with the problems of application. But whenever any collection of intellectuals, of *clercs*,[1] takes upon itself to issue a manifesto at some moment of crisis, then I think that it is within our province to discuss, not so much the crisis itself, as the opinions of the intellectuals about it.

The discharge of collective manifestoes is not such a regular part of the activity of intellectuals in this country, as it is in France. Nor is the occasion for such activity so likely to be a matter of Foreign Policy – there is perhaps a stronger tendency here to trust the Government of the day, or at least to refrain from embarrassing it. The more frequent occasion, here, is when there emerges some menace to civil liberty: in which circumstances the most unlikely company may be found together. In fact, the consent of unlikely company is here rather the rule than the exception: the whole point of our manifestoes is often the surprising agreement of men of very different views. But in France, not only are the occasions which provoke manifestoes more frequent, but they more regularly assemble the signatories on party lines: so that every manifesto gives cause for a counter-manifesto. The Abyssinian situation has naturally produced declarations from three groups of distinguished writers: from the Right, from the Left, and from the Catholics.[2] It is the first and the last of these that I have at hand, and propose to examine. There should be no need to mention names; for there must be very few eminent men of letters in France whose names are not to be found on one or another of the three.

The declaration of the Right makes a great point, as one would expect, of the need for solidarity of the *Occident*: a term which seems to confound

the old civilizations of Asia with the *amalgame de tribus incultes* which is Abyssinia.[3] It points out the inconsistency of the position of France and Britain, both great colonial powers, opposing the *mission coloniale* of another great nation of kindred culture.[4] It warns both France and Britain that the development of such a policy can only tend to hand over the whole of Europe to the forces of revolution. And it protests against the false assumption of Geneva, which would treat higher and lower, civilized and barbarous nations on the same footing of equality.[5] Any interference with the activities of Italy in Abyssinia is an attack upon the civilization of the West. I quote one paragraph in the original, so that I may not appear to be putting my own construction upon the text:

> L'intelligence – là où elle n'a pas encore abdiqué son autorité – se refuse à être la complice d'une telle catastrophe. Aussi les soussignés croient-ils devoir s'élever contre tant de causes de mort, propres à ruiner définitivement la partie la plus précieuse de notre univers, et qui ne menacent pas seulement la vie, les biens matériels et spirituels de milliers d'individus, mais la notion même de l'*homme*, la légitimité de ses avoirs et de ses titres – toutes choses que l'Occident a tenues jusqu'ici pour supérieures et auxquelles il a dû sa grandeur historique avec ses vertus créatrices.[6] [3]

While we must feel a certain sympathy, this sympathy cannot be without important qualifications. The argument is evidently flimsy, unless supported by all the reasons which are not expressed: those of the foreign and domestic politics of France. That the French should be in constant apprehension of German aggression, and that their policy toward Italy should be dominated by this fear, is quite natural, and we should feel warm sympathy with them in their difficulty. But this manifesto is not explicitly based on any such practical considerations: it professes to take a high moral tone. The signatories have at least deprived themselves of any right to criticize as "hypocritical" the equally high moral tone of British politicians: in view of the readiness of continental publicists to accuse Britain of hypocrisy, this point is worth making. But if one is to play this particular game, and behave as if neither Britain nor France had any interest in the business except the maintenance of a high moral tone, then the argument of these French intellectuals seems to me much the weaker of the two. The meaning of the word *intelligence*, for instance, in this context, dissolves into an emotional appeal.

The writers who have signed the Catholic manifesto, on the other hand, seem to me to be in a position, not only stronger than that of those who signed the manifesto quoted above, but stronger than that of most British opinion. They do not discuss the League of Nations, but base their notions on a higher morality than the morality of that confused mixture of spiritual and secular motives. They are therefore not called upon to defend the history of British or French colonial expansion; nor do they, as adherents of the Right in either country are inclined to do, identify Christianity with the maintenance of a particular social and political regime, or with the hegemony of Europe over the rest of the world. They are not concerned with sanctions, or with any action to be taken against Italy; but they are quite clear in their minds about the iniquity of a war of aggression:

> Ni le besoin d'expansion, ni l'œuvre de civilisation à accomplir n'ont jamais donné le droit de s'emparer des territoires d'autrui et d'y porter la mort. Il est bien vrai que les peuples parvenus à un degré plus élevé de culture ont mission d'aider les autres, mais c'est une dérision d'invoquer cette mission d'assistance pour se livrer à une guerre de conquête et de prestige.[7]

With respect to their denunciation of the "sophism of the inequality of races" there is perhaps a qualification to be made.[8] No one can dispute their affirmation that "the soul and the life of a negro are as sacred as those of a white man."[9] And of great pertinence is their warning that the doctrine of the inequality of races may be applied more minutely than merely to the broad distinction of white and black: once accepted, there is no limit.[10] There is only left the distinction between the British and the French on the one hand, two peoples each of which is convinced that it is superior to every other, and the Germans and Italians, two peoples which are trying very hard to convince themselves, each for itself, that they are superior to every other. Nor need the discrimination stop there: for there is no reason why each nation should not come to find racial distinctions within itself (the harmless foible of "Norman blood" is a trace of such potential danger). But in the League of Nations, the constitution of which reflects, I think, the British liberal mentality rather than any other, there is room for a confusion of the religious and the secular. The charge brought by the French intellectuals of the Right, that the League of Nations has put higher and lower civilizations, superior and inferior nations, on the same level, is not without foundation; though we may remind them that it was not Britain

that demanded the admission of Abyssinia.[11] There will probably always remain a real inequality of races, as there is always inequality of individuals. But the fundamental identity in *humanity* must always be asserted; as must the equal sanctity of moral obligation to people of every race. All men are equal before God; if they cannot all be equal in this world, yet our moral obligation towards inferiors is exactly the same as that towards our equals.

The second manifesto, in closing, remarks that "the organization (*organisme*) of Geneva can only be truly useful for the order of the world if the governments sincerely desire justice and peace."[12] Well, we believe that the majority, including our own, have sincerely desired peace; whether they have all sincerely desired justice, except within limits, is more open to question.

It must be reported, for the sake of completeness, that the second manifesto has been followed by a third, or rather by a note, signed by eminent writers of the Left, expressing warm approval.[13] This support will no doubt damn the manifesto in the eyes of those who abhor extreme socialism for motives in which a very little Christianity is blended with a great deal of self-interest and prejudice. But no one is any more justified in a general condemnation of the principles of the extreme Left, than he is in a general condemnation of those of the extreme Right. The principle of justice affirmed by the intellectuals of the Left is at least analogous to Christian justice. And to say that to maintain Christian principles, in a crisis such as that which has called forth these various declarations, is to weaken our defences against communism, is a confession of cowardice. It is an admission that the truth is not strong enough to prevail against its imitations; it is to fight the devil with powers of evil. That is not to deny that between the Christian and the communist there is a great gulf fixed,[14] and that in this country we are in danger from amiable bridge-builders.

T. S. E.

NOTES

1. In his 1928 review of Julien Benda's *La Trahison des clercs*, TSE describes "*clercs*" as "a word which we can only translate feebly as 'intellectuals'" (3.345).

2. On 3 Oct 1935, Italian forces invaded the independent state of Ethiopia (then referred to as Abyssinia), beginning the Second Italo-Abyssinian War which lasted until May 1936, ending in Italian subjugation of the African country.

3. "Un manifeste d'intellectuels français pour la défense de l'Occident," appeared simultaneously in several journals on 4 Oct 1935: *Journal des débats politiques et littéraires* (3); *Le Temps* (2); *L'Action Française* (1-2). Its principal author was Henri Massis, and it was initially

published with the names of sixty-three others, including many in the Action Française circle, which TSE followed: Charles Maurras, Jean-Pierre Maxence, and Thierry Maulnier. The manifesto eventually garnered more than 850 signatures.

"On n'hésite pas à traiter l'Italie en coupable, à la désigner au monde comme l'ennemi commun – sous prétexte de protéger en Afrique l'indépendance d'un amalgame de tribus incultes, qu'ainsi l'on encourage à appeler les grands États en champ clos" (*Journal des débats* 3). *Trans*: "One does not hesitate to treat Italy as guilty, to identify it to the world as the common enemy – under the pretext of protecting the independence of an amalgam of uncultivated tribes in Africa. For thus one also risks picking a fight with the other great nations."

In this "Commentary," TSE examines manifestos from the political right and from the Catholic viewpoint. Though TSE does not cite a particular instance of a manifesto from the left, an editorial in *Le Populaire* responded a day after Massis's manifesto appeared, critiquing its conception of the "Occident": "Ce manifeste abuse étrangement de l'amitié du peuple français pour le peuple italien, ainsi que de la 'notion d'Occident' et de celle d''intelligence'" ("Réponse au manifeste des intellectuels fascistes," 5 Oct 1935). *Trans*: "This manifesto strangely takes advantage of the friendship of the French people for the Italian people, as well as the 'notion of the Occident' and that of 'intelligence.'" The response is endorsed by fifteen signatories and 209 unpublished signatures; there follow fifty-six further names of "writers, artists, and intellectuals," invoking the weight of 8,500 members of the Comité de vigilance des intellectuels antifascistes in solidarity with the signatories.

4. "Sur cette notion où l'Occident incarne ses idéaux, ses honneurs, son humanité, de grands peuples, comme l'Angleterre, comme la France, se fondent pour justifier une œuvre colonisatrice qui reste une des plus hautes, des plus fécondes expressions de leur vitalité. Et n'est-ce pas leur propre mission coloniale que ces grandes puissances devraient dès l'abord abdiquer, si elles voulaient, sans imposture, défendre à Rome de poursuivre en des régions africaines, où elle s'est acquis depuis longtemps d'incontestables droits, l'accomplissement de desseins qu'elle a loyalement formulés et préparés à découvert?" (3).

Trans: "On this notion – in which the West embodies its ideals, its honors, and its humanity – great peoples, like England and France, were established to justify the colonizing work that remains one of the highest, most fruitful expressions of their vitality. And is it not their own colonial mission that the great powers should from the outset abdicate, if they wanted, without pretense, to forbid Rome to pursue in parts of Africa, where it has long established incontestable rights, the achievement of plans that it has honestly formulated and openly prepared?"

5. "Aussi ne voit-on [pas] sans stupeur un peuple, dont l'Empire colonial occupe un cinquième du globe, s'opposer aux justifiables entreprises de la jeune Italie et faire inconsidérément sienne la dangereuse fiction de l'égalité absolue de toutes les nations, ce qui lui vaut en l'occurrence l'appui de toutes les forces révolutionnaires qui se réclament de la même idéologie pour combattre le régime intérieur de l'Italie et livrer du même coup l'Europe aux bouleversements désirés."

"C'est à cette alliance désastreuse que Genève prête les redoutables alibis d'un faux universalisme juridique qui met sur le pied d'égalité le supérieur et l'inférieur, le civilisé et le barbare" (3).

Trans: "So we cannot see without astonishment a people, whose colonial empire occupies one-fifth of the globe, opposing the justifiable business of the young Italy and recklessly endorsing the dangerous fiction of the absolute equality of all nations, which, in this case,

produces the support of all the revolutionary forces who lay claim to the same ideology for fighting the government of Italy and at the same time handing Europe over to the desired upheaval."

"It is to this disastrous alliance that Geneva lends the formidable alibis of a false, juridical universalism that puts the superior and the inferior, the civilized and the barbaric on an equal footing."

6. *Trans*: "Intelligence – where it has not yet abdicated its authority – refuses to be an accomplice to such a catastrophe. So the undersigned believe they must protest against so many causes of death, which definitively ruin the most precious part of our universe, and not only threaten the life, the material and spiritual goods of thousands of individuals, but the very concept of *man*, the legitimacy of his assets and his entitlements – all things that the Occident has so far held as superior and to which it has owed its historic grandeur along with its creative virtues."

7. "Pour la justice et la paix," *La Vie catholique*, 19 Oct 1935, 3, with eighty-one signatories, including Paul Claudel, Jacques Maritain, and François Mauriac; it appeared simultaneously in *Sept*, a Catholic weekly. Reprinted in Jacques et Raïssa Maritain, *Œuvres complètes*, vol 6 (Fribourg, Switzerland: Éditions Universitaires, 1984), 1040-42.

Trans: "Neither the need for expansion nor accomplishing the work of civilization has ever given the right to seize the territories of others and to bring death there. It is true that the people who have achieved a higher degree of culture have a mission to aid others, but it is ridiculous to invoke this mission of assistance in order to engage in a war of conquest and prestige."

8. "Il importe aussi de dénoncer le sophisme de l'inégalité des races" (3; 1042). *Trans*: "It is also important to denounce the sophism of the inequality of races."

9. "Le christianisme nous fait comprendre et réaliser cette vérité d'ordre naturel que la justice est due aux hommes sans acception de personne, ni de race, ni de nation, et que l'âme et la vie d'un noir est aussi sacrée que celle d'un blanc" (3; 1042).

Trans: "Christianity makes us understand and realize this truth of the natural order: that justice is due to men without respect to person, race, or nation, and that the soul and the life of a black man are as sacred as those of a white man."

10. "Si le sens du juste et de l'humain ne suffisait pas ici à émouvoir les cœurs, au moins la considération de cet Occident qu'on essaie avec tant de légèreté de lier à une mauvaise cause devrait-elle porter tout esprit réfléchi à redouter l'usage que d'autres violents peuvent faire de ces mêmes doctrines de l'inégalité des races, et de l'insignifiance des manquements aux engagements internationaux" (3; 1041).

Trans: "If the sense of justice and humanity is not enough here to move hearts, then at least consider that the West, which has been so thoughtlessly tied to a bad cause, should warily reflect on the uses that other violent people could make of those same doctrines of racial inequality, and on the insignificance of breaches of international commitments."

11. Italy and Great Britain were founding members of the League of Nations (1920). Abyssinia was admitted to the League in 1923, a controversial maneuver that France and Italy supported, and to which Great Britain and other countries raised objections.

12. "l'organisme de Genève ne peut être vraiment utile à l'ordre du monde que si les peuples et les gouvernements veulent sincèrement la justice et la paix" (3; 1042).

13. "Une lettre d'un groupe d'écrivains" [A Letter from a Group of Writers] begins: "Les écrivains soussignés, après avoir pris connaissance du courageux manifeste 'Pour la justice et la

paix,' paru le 18 octobre dans différents journaux, considèrent qu'il est opportun de vous demander d'unir leurs signatures à celles de vos amis" (*L'Aube*, 23 Oct 1935; *Sept*, 25 Oct 1935; rpt. in Jacques et Raïssa Maritain, *Œuvres complètes*, vol 6, 1176). *Trans*: "The undersigned writers, having taken note of the courageous manifesto 'For Justice and Peace,' printed on October 18 in various newspapers, consider it opportune to ask you to add their signatures to those of your friends." The letter is signed by André Gide, Julien Benda, André Chamson, Jean Cassou, Léopold Chauveau, Andrée Viollis, Jacques Chabannes, Jean Schlumberger, Claude Aveline, Roger Martin du Gard, Jean Guéhenno, and Henry de Montherlant.

14. In the parable of the beggar Lazarus and the rich man, Abraham refuses to let Lazarus cross the abyss to ease the suffering of the rich man, tormented by flames: "between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence" (Luke 16: 26 [KJV]).

An unsigned review of *Totem: The Exploitation of Youth*, by Harold Stovin

London: Methuen, 1935. Pp. 237.[1]

The Criterion: A Quarterly Review, 15 (Jan 1936) 363

This is a disappointing book. The title, the documentary method, and to some extent the writing, which is plain and good, suggest that Mr. Stovin is a disciple of the author of *The Doom of Youth*; but the latter part of the book shows that Mr. Stovin has little in common with Mr. Wyndham Lewis.[2] The first part of the book, which is a documented account of the Boy Scouts, Toc H, the Oxford Groupers and such "movements," contains valuable material and is horrid reading.[3] But Mr. Stovin does not leave the facts to speak for themselves, or leave Lord Baden Powell, "Tubby" Clayton, and F. R. Barry to stew in their own juice.[4] He has to bring in an ambitious and doubtful parallel from anthropology, and find something more than an analogy to totemism.[5] If the craving that leads to these queer group manifestations is so deep as all that, it is hardly likely to be disposed of by the rationalistic communism which seems to be Mr. Stovin's nostrum; and indeed Mr. Stovin might have given a better appearance of disinterestedness if he had investigated communism itself for traces of totemism. But he is one of those for whom communism means freedom of the individual, and other forms of association mean slavery.

NOTES

1. Unsigned, but credited to TSE in the *Criterion* index.

2. Wyndham Lewis's *The Doom of Youth* (1932), a sociological account of youth culture, was withdrawn after the novelist Alec Waugh, author of the autobiographical novel *The Loom of Youth* (1917), which alluded to homosexual relationships among school boys, filed a libel suit claiming that Lewis's book contained innuendoes of Waugh's sexual perversion. TSE refers to *The Loom of Youth* in a brief review of Waugh's poetry (1.734, 1.735 n.11).

3. Harold William Riggall Stovin (1909-91) argues that these and other youth movements are "cults of Fellowship" (72) that establish themselves as social semireligions or tribal totems, and that the brotherhood spirit fostered in them suppresses personality and becomes inimical to individual development.

4. Robert Baden-Powell, 1st Baron Baden-Powell (1857-1941), founded the Scouting Movement for Boys in 1907-08; Talbot House, known as Toc H (from signal code), founded in

Belgium in 1915 as a Christian respite for soldiers, was established in London in 1920 as a youth center for Christian fellowship and community service by Rev. Philip ("Tubby") Clayton (1885-1972); Oxford Groups, an evangelical movement focused on "World Revival" and spiritual fellowship that supports the spiritual lives of individuals, was founded in 1925 by Frank Buchman but was later influenced by the modernist writings of F. R. Barry (1890-1976), liberal vicar of St. Mary's Cathedral in Oxford and chaplain at Balliol College from 1928 to 1933.

5. Stovin states that Barry's textbook for Christian students, *The Relevance of Christianity* (1931), shows "the extent to which totemism is an integral part of Christianity. . . . Modernist Christianity, with its pseudo-scientific and deeply utilitarian bias, is really a gigantic 'quack' appeal to a waning clientele" (223-24). He also cites W. H. Auden on Oxford Groups in Auden's "The Group Movement and the Middle Classes" in *Oxford and the Groups*, ed. R. H. S. Crossman (Oxford: Blackwell, 1934), 89-101: "In an extremely interesting analysis of the Oxford Groups, W. H. Auden, a well-known modern poet, urges that the unself-conscious individual needs to be in a group, to give him 'emotional security' and save him from hopeless instability. 'Only in the small group,' he says, 'probably not larger than twelve, is it possible for the individual under normal circumstances to lose himself, for his death instincts to be neutralized in the same way as those of the separate cells of the metazoa neutralize each another' in the body" (Auden 98; Stovin, 86-87). In "The Intellectuals in Retreat" (1935), Rev. J. C. Hardwick associated TSE with Buchman and the Oxford Groups (5.275).

An unsigned review of *Selected Shelburne Essays*, by Paul Elmer More[1]

New York: Oxford UP, 1935. Pp. xiii + 297.

The Criterion: A Literary Review, 15 (Jan 1936) 363

This volume, No. 434 of "The World's Classics," comes to us from New York, but we hope that it is published in this country as well, since it is the first selection from the essays of the finest literary critic of his time. The Shelburne Essays, are so numerous that any selection so restricted as this, must appear to have something arbitrary about it.[2†] These at least are chosen by their author; and their variety is such that we may presume that he had in mind to show the variety of his interest. Out of the thirteen essays, of which one is on "Criticism" itself, only two deal with American subjects: Jonathan Edwards and Thoreau. The great essay on Huxley (or we might say, on Huxley and Disraeli) is included.[3] The volume is to be considered as an introduction to, not a substitute for, the complete Shelburne Essays.

NOTES

1. Unsigned, but credited to "T. S. E." in the index. The Shelburne Essays (1904-21), named after a village in Maine to which Paul Elmer More retreated for two years of reflection, is an eleven-volume collection of reviews and articles, many written in his capacity as editor of *The Nation* (1909-14). TSE had reviewed the ninth volume, *Aristocracy and Justice* (1915), in "An American Critic" (1916) (1.406), and the first volume of the new series, *The Demon of the Absolute* (1928), in "Mr. P. E. More's Essays" (1929) (3.585).

2†. It is possible that the comma following the phrase "Shelburne Essays" in this sentence is an error on the part of TSE or the typesetter. But in keeping with TSE's odd comma usage, which often includes unnecessary punctuation between subject and predicate, the editors have maintained this sentence as it appeared in print.

3. TSE alludes to the following essays: "Criticism" (1-24), "Thoreau's Journal" (97-117), "Thomas Henry Huxley" (188-228), and "Jonathan Edwards" (229-52). TSE wrote to Bruce Richmond on 13 Oct 1939: "I am also sending the Selected Shelburne Essays volume. I don't know whether you will find anything in that to your liking, but the last paragraph of the essay on Huxley is good eternal verity in a light and readable form."

Preface to *Essays Ancient and Modern*, by T. S. Eliot

London: Faber & Faber, 1936. Pp. 190; Preface, 5-7.

A volume of essays entitled *For Lancelot Andrewes* has gone out of print, after some eight years, and a new edition was proposed. I have taken the opportunity of changing the title, which had served its turn, of omitting the preface, which had more than served its turn,[1] and of omitting two papers with which I was dissatisfied, on Machiavelli and on Crashaw.[2] And as the essay on Thomas Middleton is now included in another collection called *Elizabethan Essays*,[3] there was no point in including that either. On the other hand I have added five essays not previously collected: "Religion and Literature," "Catholicism and International Order," "The *Pensées* of Pascal," "Modern Education and the Classics," and "In Memoriam."[4]

I renew my acknowledgment of obligation to the Editors of *The Times Literary Supplement*, *Theology*, *The Dial* (New York), and *The Forum* (New York) on account of essays which appeared in the earlier volume. "Religion and Literature" was originally given as one of a series of addresses arranged in 1934 by the Rev. V. A. Demant and published together as a volume called *Faith that Illuminates* (The Centenary Press). "Catholicism and International Order" was an address delivered to the Anglo-Catholic Summer School of Sociology at Oxford in 1933, and was printed in *Christendom*. "The *Pensées* of Pascal" appears as the Introduction to the English translation of that work published in the *Everyman Library*. "Modern Education and the Classics" is the revision of an address delivered to the Classical Club of Harvard University in 1933, and hitherto unprinted. "In Memoriam" is the expanded version of an Introduction written for the Nelson Classics edition of *Poems of Tennyson*. To the several editors and publishers I wish to make grateful acknowledgment.

I am aware that most of these papers date themselves, even when I have forgotten the dates. It may well be that in a few years' time I may wish to remove some from currency, as I have in the past; but I may remark that nothing that has happened in more recent times has caused me to wish to modify in a more favourable sense my comments on the League of Nations in "Catholicism and International Order." The note on Baudelaire antedates the longer paper printed in my *Selected Essays*, and "our time" is

perhaps over: nevertheless the note seemed to me worth preserving for the present.[5] I observe that the advertisement of *For Lancelot Andrewes* advanced the claim that the essays had "a unity of their own."[6] I do not know whether my ideals of unity are higher, or merely my pretensions more modest, than eight years ago; I offer this book, as the title implies, only as a miscellaneous collection, having no greater unity than that of having been written by the same person.

NOTES

1. For the Preface to *For Lancelot Andrewes* (1928), see 3.513.

2. "Niccolò Machiavelli" (3.111) and "A Note on Richard Crashaw" (3.379).

3. "Thomas Middleton" (1927) (3.122); *Elizabethan Essays* (London: Faber & Faber, 1934). Only the essay "John Marston" (5.114) was printed there for the first time; the others were reprinted from *Selected Essays* (1932).

4. "Religion and Literature" (1935) (5.218), "Catholicism and International Order" (1933) (4.534), "The *Pensées* of Pascal" (1931) (4.338), "Modern Education and the Classics" (1936) (5.337), "In Memoriam" (1936) (5.323). For the table of contents of *EAM*, see the list of illustrations.

5. "Baudelaire in our Time," included in *For Lancelot Andrewes*, was originally published as "Poet and Saint . . ." (1927), a review of Arthur Symons's *Baudelaire: Prose and Poetry* (3.71). It was followed by "Baudelaire" (1930) (4.155).

6. The front of the dust jacket for the Faber edition of *For Lancelot Andrewes* states that the volume "consists of seven essays which are selected from Mr. Eliot's work of the past two or three years, and which he believes show some consistency. The subjects cover a wide range of literature, theology and philosophy; but taken together they have a unity of their own."

In Memoriam[1]

Tennyson is a great poet, for reasons that are perfectly clear.[2] He has three qualities which are seldom found together except in the greatest poets: abundance, variety, and complete competence. We therefore cannot appreciate his work unless we read a good deal of it. We may not admire his aims: but whatever he sets out to do, he succeeds in doing, with a mastery which gives us the sense of confidence that is one of the major pleasures of poetry. His variety of metrical accomplishment is astonishing. Without making the mistake of trying to write Latin verse in English, he knew everything about Latin versification that an English poet could use; and he said of himself that he thought he knew the quantity of the sounds of every English word except perhaps *scissors*.[3] He had the finest ear of any English poet since Milton. He was the master of Swinburne; and the versification of Swinburne, himself a classical scholar, is often crude and sometimes cheap in comparison with Tennyson's. Tennyson extended very widely the range of active metrical forms in English: in *Maud* alone the variety is prodigious.[4] But innovation in metric is not to be measured solely by the width of the deviation from accepted practice. It is a matter of the historical situation: at some moments a more violent change may be necessary than at others. The problem differs at every period. At some times, a violent revolution may be neither possible nor desirable; at such times, a change which may appear very slight is the change which the important poet will make. The innovation of Pope, after Dryden, may not seem very great; but it is the mark of the master to be able to make small changes which will be highly significant, as at another time to make radical changes, through which poetry will curve back again to its norm.[5†]

There is an early poem, only published in the official biography, which already exhibits Tennyson as a master.[6] According to a note, Tennyson later expressed regret that he had removed the poem from his Juvenilia;[7] it is a fragmentary *Hesperides*, in which only the "Song of the Three Sisters" is complete. The poem illustrates Tennyson's classical learning and his mastery of metre. The first stanza of the "Song of the Three Sisters" is as follows:

> The Golden Apple, the Golden Apple, the hallow'd fruit,
> Guard it well, guard it warily,

Singing airily,
Standing about the charmèd root.
Round about all is mute,
As the snowfield on the mountain-peaks,
As the sandfield at the mountain-foot.
Crocodiles in briny creeks
Sleep and stir not: all is mute.
If ye sing not, if ye make false measure,
We shall lose eternal pleasure,
Worth eternal want of rest.
Laugh not loudly: watch the treasure
Of the wisdom of the West.
In a corner wisdom whispers. Five and three
(Let it not be preach'd abroad) make an awful mystery:
For the blossom unto threefold music bloweth;
Evermore it is born anew,
And the sap in threefold music floweth,
From the root,
Drawn in the dark,
Up to the fruit,
Creeping under the fragrant bark,
Líquid góld, hóneyswéet thró and thró.

[(*slow movement*)]

Keen-eyed Sisters, singing airily,
Looking warily
Every way,
Guard the apple night and day,
Lest one from the East come and take it away.[8]

A young man who can write like that has not much to learn about metric; and the young man who wrote these lines somewhere between 1828 and 1830 was doing something new. There is something here[9†] not derived from any of his predecessors. In some of Tennyson's early verse the influence of Keats is visible – in songs and in blank verse; and less successfully, there is the influence of Wordsworth, as in "Dora."[10] But in the lines I have just quoted, and in the two Mariana poems, "The Sea Fairies," "The Lotos-Eaters," "The Lady of Shalott" and elsewhere, there is something wholly new.[11]

All day within the dreamy house,
  The doors upon their hinges creak'd;
The blue fly sung in the pane; the mouse
  Behind the mouldering wainscot shriek'd,
Or from the crevice peer'd about.[12]

The blue fly sung in the pane (the line would be ruined if you substituted *sang* for *sung*) is enough to tell us that something important has happened.[13†]

The reading of long poems is not nowadays much practised: in the age of Tennyson it appears to have been easier. For a good many long poems were not only written but widely circulated; and the level was high: even the second-rate long poems of that time, like *The Light of Asia*, are better worth reading than most long modern novels.[14] But Tennyson's long poems are not long poems in quite the same sense as those of his contemporaries. They are very different in kind from *Sordello* or *The Ring and the Book*, to name the greatest by the greatest of his contemporary poets.[15] *Maud* and *In Memoriam* are each a series of poems, given form by the greatest lyrical resourcefulness that a poet has ever shown. The *Idylls of the King* have merits and defects similar[16†] to those of *The Princess*.[17] An idyll is a "short poem descriptive of some picturesque scene or incident"; in choosing the name Tennyson perhaps showed an appreciation of his limitations. For his poems are always descriptive, and always picturesque; they are never really narrative. The *Idylls of the King* are no different in kind from some of his early poems; the "Morte d'Arthur" is in fact an early poem.[18] *The Princess* is still an idyll, but an idyll that is too long. Tennyson's versification in this poem is as masterly as elsewhere: it is a poem which we must read, but which we excuse ourselves from reading twice. And it is worth while recognizing the reason why we return again and again, and are always stirred by the lyrics which intersperse it, and which are among the greatest of all poetry of their kind, and yet avoid the poem itself. It is not, as we may think while reading, the outmoded attitude towards the relations of the sexes, the exasperating views on the subjects of matrimony, celibacy and female education, that make us recoil from *The Princess*.[19*] We can swallow the most antipathetic doctrines if we are given an exciting narrative. But for narrative Tennyson had no gift at all. For a static poem, and a moving poem, on the same subject, you have only to compare his "Ulysses" with the condensed and intensely exciting narrative of that hero in the XXVIth Canto of Dante's *Inferno*.[20] Dante is telling a story. Tennyson is only stating an

elegiac mood. The very greatest poets set before you real men talking, carry you on in real events moving. Tennyson could not tell a story at all. It is not that in *The Princess* he tries to tell a story and failed: it is rather than an idyll protracted to such length becomes unreadable. So *The Princess* is a dull poem; one of the poems of which we may say that they are beautiful but dull.[21†]

But in *Maud* and in *In Memoriam*, Tennyson is doing what every conscious artist does, turning his limitations to good purpose. *Maud* consists of a few very beautiful lyrics, such as "Oh let the solid ground," "Birds in the high Hall-garden," and "Go not, happy day," around which the semblance of a dramatic situation has been constructed with the greatest metrical virtuosity.[22†] The whole situation is unreal; the ravings of the lover on the edge of insanity sound false, and fail, as do the bellicose bellowings, to make one's flesh creep with sincerity.[23†] It would be foolish to suggest that Tennyson ought to have gone through some experience similar to that described: for a poet with dramatic gifts, a situation quite remote from his personal experience may release the strongest emotion. And I do not believe for a moment that Tennyson was a man of mild feelings or weak passions. There is no evidence in his poetry that he knew the experience of violent passion for a woman; but there is plenty of evidence of emotional intensity and violence – but of emotion so deeply suppressed, even from himself, as to tend rather towards the blackest melancholia than towards dramatic action. And it is emotion which, so far as my reading of the poems can discover, attained no ultimate clear purgation. I should reproach Tennyson not for mildness, or tepidity, but rather for lack of serenity.

> Of love that never found his earthly close,
> What sequel?[24]

The fury of *Maud* is shrill rather than deep, though one feels in every passage what exquisite adaptation of metre to the mood Tennyson is attempting to express. I think that the effect of feeble violence, which the poem as a whole produces, is the result of a fundamental error of form. A poet can express his feelings as fully through a dramatic, as through a lyrical form; but *Maud* is neither one thing nor the other: just as *The Princess* is more than an idyll, and less than a narrative. In *Maud*, Tennyson neither identifies himself with the lover, nor identifies the lover with himself: consequently, the real feelings of Tennyson, profound and tumultuous as they are, never arrive at expression.

It is, in my opinion, in *In Memoriam*, that Tennyson finds full expression. Its technical merit alone is enough to ensure its perpetuity. While Tennyson's technical competence is everywhere masterly and satisfying, *In Memoriam* is the most unapproachable[25†] of all his poems. Here are one hundred and thirty-two passages, each of several quatrains in the same form, and never monotony or repetition. And the poem has to be comprehended as a whole. We may not memorize a few passages, we cannot find a "fair sample"; we have to comprehend the whole of a poem which is essentially the length that it is. We may choose to remember:

Dark house, by which once more I stand
  Here in the long unlovely street,
  Doors, where my heart was used to beat
So quickly, waiting for a hand,

A hand that can be clasp'd no more –
  Behold me, for I cannot sleep,
  And like a guilty thing I creep
At earliest morning to the door.

He is not here; but far away
  The noise of life begins again,
  And ghastly through the drizzling rain
On the bald street breaks the blank day. [344]

This is great poetry, economical of words, a universal emotion related to a particular place;[26†] and it gives me the shudder that I fail to get from anything in *Maud*. But such a passage, by itself, is not *In Memoriam*: *In Memoriam* is the whole poem. It is unique: it is a long poem made by putting together lyrics, which have only the unity and continuity of a diary, the concentrated diary of a man confessing himself. It is a diary of which we have to read every word.

Apparently Tennyson's contemporaries, once they had accepted *In Memoriam*, regarded it as a message of hope and reassurance to their rather fading Christian faith. It happens now and then that a poet by some strange accident expresses the mood of his generation, at the same time that he is expressing a mood of his own which is quite remote from that of his generation. This is not a question of insincerity: there is an amalgam of yielding and opposition below the level of consciousness. Tennyson himself, on the conscious level of the man who talks to reporters and poses for

photographers, to judge from remarks made in conversation and recorded in his son's *Memoir*, consistently asserted a convinced, if somewhat sketchy, Christian belief.[27] And he was a friend of Frederick Denison Maurice – nothing seems odder about that age than the respect which its eminent people felt for each other.[28†] Nevertheless, I get a very different impression from *In Memoriam* from that which Tennyson's contemporaries seem to have got. It is of a very much more interesting and tragic Tennyson. His biographers have not failed to remark that he had a good deal of the temperament of the mystic – certainly not at all the mind of the theologian. He was desperately anxious to hold the faith of the believer, without being very clear about what he wanted to believe: he was capable of illumination which he was incapable of understanding. The "Strong Son of God, immortal Love," [339] with an invocation of whom the poem opens, has only a hazy connexion with the Logos, or the Incarnate God. Tennyson is distressed by the idea of a mechanical universe; he is naturally, in lamenting his friend, teased by the hope of immortality and reunion beyond death. Yet the renewal craved for seems at best but a continuance, or a substitute for the joys of friendship upon earth. His desire for immortality never is quite the desire for Eternal Life; his concern is for the loss of man rather than for the gain of God.

shall he,

Man, her last work, who seem'd so fair,
  Such splendid purpose in his eyes,
  Who roll'd the psalm to wintry skies,
Who built him fanes of fruitless prayer,

Who trusted God was love indeed,
  And love Creation's final law –
  Though Nature, red in tooth and claw
With ravine, shriek'd against his creed –

Who loved, who suffer'd countless ills,
  Who battled for the True, the Just,
  Be blown about the desert dust,
Or seal'd within the iron hills? [372]

That strange abstraction, "Nature," becomes a real god or goddess, perhaps more real, at moments, to Tennyson than God ("Are God and Nature then

at strife [?]" [371]). The hope of immortality is confused (typically of the period) with the hope of the gradual and steady improvement of this world. Much has been said of Tennyson's interest in contemporary science, and of the impression of Darwin. *In Memoriam*, in any case, antedates *The Origin of Species* by several years, and the belief in social progress by democracy antedates it by many more; and I suspect that the faith of Tennyson's age in human progress would have been quite as strong even had the discoveries of Darwin been postponed by fifty years.[29†] And after all, there is no logical connexion: the belief in progress being current already, the discoveries of Darwin were harnessed to it:

No longer half-akin to brute,
  For all we thought, and loved, and did,
  And hoped, and suffer'd, is but seed
Of what in them is flower and fruit;

Whereof the man, that with me trod
  This planet, was a noble type
  Appearing ere the times were ripe,
That friend of mine who lives in God –

That God, which ever lives and loves,
  One God, one law, one element,
  And one far-off divine event,
To which the whole creation moves. [428]

These lines show an interesting compromise between the religious attitude and, what is quite a different thing, the belief in human perfectibility; but the contrast was not so apparent to Tennyson's contemporaries. They may have been taken in by it, but I don't think that Tennyson himself was, quite: his feelings were more honest than his mind. There is evidence elsewhere – even in an early poem, "Locksley Hall,"[30] for example – that Tennyson by no means regarded with complacency all the changes that were going on about him in the progress of industrialism and the rise of the mercantile and manufacturing and banking classes; and he may have contemplated the future of England, as his years drew out, with increasing gloom. Temperamentally, he was opposed to the doctrine that he was moved to accept and to praise.[31†]

Tennyson's feelings, I have said, were honest; but they were usually a good way below the surface. *In Memoriam* can, I think, justly be called a religious

poem, but for another reason than that which made it seem religious to his contemporaries. It is not religious because of the quality of its faith, but because of the quality of its doubt. Its faith is a poor thing, but its doubt is a very intense experience. *In Memoriam* is a poem of despair, but of despair of a religious kind. And to qualify its despair with the adjective "religious" is to elevate it above most of its derivatives. For *The City of Dreadful Night*, and *A Shropshire Lad*, and the poems of Thomas Hardy, are small work in comparison with *In Memoriam*:[32†] It is greater than they and comprehends them.[33*†]

In ending we must go back to the beginning and remember that *In Memoriam* would not be a great poem, or Tennyson a great poet, without the technical accomplishment. Tennyson is the great master of metric as well as of melancholia; I do not think any poet in English has ever had a finer ear for vowel sound, as well as a subtler feeling for some moods of anguish:

> Dear as remember'd kisses after death,
> And sweet as those by hopeless fancy feign'd
> On lips that are for others; deep as love,
> Deep as first love, and wild with all regret;[34]

And this technical gift of Tennyson's is no slight thing. Tennyson lived in a time which was already acutely time-conscious: a great many things seemed to be happening, railways were being built, discoveries were being made, the face of the world was changing. That was a time busy in keeping up to date. It had, for the most part, no hold on permanent things, on permanent truths about man and God and life and death.[35] The surface of Tennyson stirred about with his time; and he had nothing to which to hold fast except his unique and unerring feeling for the sounds of words.[36] But in this he had something that no one else had. Tennyson's surface, his technical accomplishment, is intimate with his depths: what we most quickly see about Tennyson is that which moves between the surface and the depths, that which is of slight importance.[37†] By looking innocently at the surface we are most likely to come to the depths, to the abyss of sorrow. Tennyson is not only a minor Virgil, he is also with Virgil as Dante saw him, a Virgil among the Shades, the saddest of all English poets, among the Great in Limbo, the most instinctive rebel[38†] against the society in which he was the most perfect conformist.[39†]

Tennyson seems to have reached the end of his spiritual development with *In Memoriam*; there followed no reconciliation, no resolution.

And now no sacred staff shall break in blossom,
No choral salutation lure to light
A spirit sick with perfume and sweet night,[40]

or rather with twilight, for Tennyson faced neither the darkness nor the light in his later years. The genius, the technical power, persisted to the end, but the spirit had surrendered. A gloomier end than that of Baudelaire: Tennyson had no *singulier avertissement*.[41] And having turned aside from the journey through the dark night, to become the surface flatterer of his own time, he has been rewarded with the despite of an age that succeeds his own in shallowness.

NOTES

1. As printed in *SE*; originally written as "Introduction" to *Poems of Tennyson* (Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1936). Pp. 482; ix-xix. Though written first, the introduction did not appear until May 1936, over two months after the revision included in *Essays Ancient and Modern* (Mar 1936), where the essay is given the title "In Memoriam." In the preface to *EAM*, TSE describes "In Memoriam" as "the expanded version" of the introduction, though in reality he cut as much as he added (5.321).

On 8 July 1935, John Hampden invited TSE to write an introduction for the Nelson Classics edition of Tennyson's early poems, to which TSE responded affirmatively on 12 July. TSE worked on the essay in Sept, and on 7 Oct wrote to Macmillan to secure permission to quote from "The Song of the Three Sisters" – a quotation that subsequently only appeared in the expanded version.

2. While textual variants and cuts from the "Introduction" are noted with a dagger, here and in notes 3 and 36 are noted some passages from the typescript draft that are strikingly different from both the "Introduction" and *SE*. The typescript draft of the essay begins with two paragraphs that were subsequently not published. Signaling his dissatisfaction with this opening gambit, TSE has written "Bad start" at the top of the first page:

> "We may justly (and without straining for paradox) say that Tennyson has become, in the course of two generations, the most difficult poet in our language. I can think of no major poet, either of his own time or within some centuries of his own time, whom the usual reader of poetry to-day approaches with less sympathy. That is the penalty which a poet must pay for exaggerated timeliness during his own life. Even Byron fares better: Byron survives not by the poems which pleased his generation, but by the poems in the Italian stanza which he wrote in order to displease it. Tennyson wrote nothing to displease his generation, and nothing which his generation thought it could not understand. As for the antipathy with which middle-aged and younger people now regard him, he may properly be said to have 'asked for it.' He represented an age which we are now inclined to visit with reproaches, seeing in its success the origins of our failures. He represented it so thoroughly that we need all the resources of sensibility, experience and application to look at his work like literary critics rather than sociologists. And even so, I doubt whether a century or two must not pass by before he can be regarded with detachment.

Tennyson, however, can afford to wait. Meanwhile we have to inspect his landscapes without thinking of the agricultural labourer, to read In Memoriam without thinking of Darwinism, to read Maud without thinking of militarism, to read The Princess without thinking of problems of education, to read Ulysses without comparing it with Dante, and to read The Idylls of the King without comparing them with Malory. We also have to read them with all these things in mind. For I am not going to make out my case for Tennyson, as critics are sometimes tempted to do, by selecting the poems, or passages from poems, which are least offensive to our own moral, religious or social convictions. He has been called 'Virgilian' and he is indeed, on a smaller scale, comparable to Virgil; but not only to the Virgil of the Eclogues, but to the Virgil of the Aeneid, the poet of Empire, the laureate of the Imperial Theme. The things for which one dislikes him are as integral to his greatness as what one does like; his representative character, the fact that what he wanted to give the public was what the public found that it wanted when it got it, must count in his favour when we estimate his importance. This importance none of his contemporaries questioned: he was the friend of Carlyle and of Browning, the admired of Swinburne. His faults were so much the faults of his age that we have to go to a book which censured the age – one of the keenest works of criticism which any man has ever made of his own age – Culture and Anarchy – to find a public word of derogation; or else to the private voice of Edward Fitzgerald."

3. In the typescript draft, the paragraph continues: "But this was really a modest boast; for in English the quantities of syllables vary according to the syllables which precede and follow them; and they are not simply long or short, but have a considerable range of difference between long and short. (The second syllable of the word interest, for example, may have in different contexts several values between the extremes of northern and southern colloquial English.) Tennyson knew these things by instinct. The arrangement of Tennyson's words, accordingly, is almost always distinguished by syllabic harmony; and his verse only seems bad verse when, as in places in The Two Voices and here and there throughout In Memoriam and in many other places, he is expressing an attitude which seems to us ridiculous or a general statement which seems to us incorrect. If we could everywhere read his verse with the same detachment from sense with which we read a contemporary master of verse with whom he had much in common – Edward Lear – we should nearly everywhere get the same satisfaction."

4. Published in *Maud, and Other Poems* (1855).

5†. In this expanded version, TSE has made numerous small changes to the opening. The "Introduction" originally read as follows: "Tennyson has three qualities which are hardly found together except in the greatest poets: abundance, variety, and complete competence. We therefore cannot understand his work unless we read a good deal of it. We may not admire his aims; but whatever he sets out to do, he succeeds in doing, with a mastery which gives us the sense of confidence that is one of the major pleasures of poetry. His variety of metrical accomplishment is astonishing. Without making the mistake of trying to write Latin verse in English, he knew everything about Latin and Greek versification that an English poet could use; and he said of himself that he thought he knew the quantities of the syllables of every English word except perhaps *scissors*.

"Tennyson has first of all the auditory gift: the finest sense of verbal music of any English poet since Milton. Other poets have written poems as perfectly musical as Tennyson's, but they have also written poems in which their ear failed them, and Tennyson's never failed. The versification

of Swinburne, himself a master of metric and a classical scholar, is often crude and sometimes cheap, in comparison with Tennyson's; and Tennyson was Swinburne's master. Furthermore, Tennyson extended, much more than he has been given credit for, the range of active metrical forms in English: the variety in *Maud* alone is prodigious. But innovation in metric is not to be measured by the extent of the revolution, or deviation from accepted practice. That is a matter of the historical situation; at some moments a more violent change may be necessary for the renovation of the language, and the important poet in that time will be the poet who finds the solution of that problem. At other times, such a violent revolution may be neither possible nor desirable; and, at such times, a change which to superficial inspection may be but trifling, is that which the important poet will make. The innovations of Pope, after the verse of Dryden, may seem slight; but it is the mark of the master to be able to make slight changes which will be highly significant; as it is the mark of the master, at a different time, to make radical changes, through which poetry will curve back again to its norm. The period of Tennyson did not allow or require a revolution such as that effected by Blake, Wordsworth, and Coleridge. But in early poems, which are only published in the *Memoir* by his son, and in the two "Mariana" poems, "The Sea-Fairies," "The Lotos-Eaters," "The Lady of Shalott" (in the present volume), there is something which had not been done before, and which must have been, when the poems were first published, to a small number of the really discriminating people who were able to appreciate anything new, immensely exciting."

Then follows the five-line quotation from "Mariana."

6. Hallam Tennyson's *Alfred Lord Tennyson: A Memoir* (2 vols), London: Macmillan, 1897.

7. In a bracketed note appearing before *The Hesperides*, Hallam Tennyson writes: "Published and suppressed by my father, and republished by me here (with accents written by him) in consequence of a talk that I had with him, in which he regretted that he had done away with it from among his 'Juvenilia'" (vol 1, 61).

8. Vol 1, 61-62. TSE has deleted the parenthetical direction and run the stanzas together.

9†. The word "here" does not appear in either "Introduction" or *SE*. It was presumably dropped from the typescript accidentally.

10. "Dora" (1842).

11. This paragraph with the lengthy quotation does not appear in "Introduction." "Mariana" and "The Sea Fairies" first appeared in 1830 in the collection *Poems, Chiefly Lyrical*; "Mariana in the South," "The Lotos-Eaters," and "The Lady of Shalott" were published in *Poems* (1832, title page dated 1833).

12. From "Mariana," stanza 6 (7).

13†. In "Introduction" there follow two paragraphs, here deleted: "This poem, 'Mariana,' exemplifies a poetic gift which has never been sufficiently recognized: that of being able to make the object real by arousing several senses at once; here the old house is not only seen, but heard, touched, and even smelt. Tennyson has been praised for the accuracy of his vision; and within limits this is just. He is not a *seer* as is Blake, or Wordsworth, or Coleridge: a seer is a man who sees through things in seeing them, and who makes people look at things at which they had never looked. Tennyson finds the right words to evoke what he has seen; but what he sees is what other people see. His was not the eye to elicit significance from insignificant detail; nor had he Wordsworth's passionate craving for intimacy for nature and the life of nature. Most of the time he looks out from a spacious library on to a lawn from which rises a noble oak tree. He

varies only from the English landscape to the romantic classical landscape, from the park of Sir Walter Vivian to the slopes of Mount Ida. But he knew English landscape of other kinds and under other aspects than that of peaceful dignity: the windy moors or the stormy seashore of 'Locksley Hall.' And because he is no *seer*, what he sees is an English landscape more typical than that of any other English poet. You can test this when you know Tennyson's poetry well enough: wherever you go in England, except in cities or suburbs, or among factories or slums; wherever there is unspoilt country, you will see the England of Tennyson rather than of any other poet.

"We may begin reading Tennyson with a few of his more popular poems: first the airy exercises in versification, then some of the English landscapes and the classical landscapes. But Tennyson is a major poet. That is, there is something more than can be got from any one poem or any selection of poems, and this something is what is worth finding. The poetry of Tennyson is a whole work; and to read it and understand it is an important part of experience. We have to read a good deal of him, and we have to read his long poems."

14. Sir Edwin Arnold's *The Light of Asia; or, The Great Renunciation* (1879) treats the life of Buddha.

15. Browning's *Sordello* (1840) and four-volume *The Ring and the Book* (1868-69).

16†. In "Introduction": "The *Idylls of the King* do not enter into this review as they are not included in the present volume, but their merits and defects are similar"

17. *In Memoriam* (1850), *Idylls of the King* (1859-85), *The Princess* (1847).

18. Though written in 1834, Tennyson's "Morte d'Arthur" was first published in 1842 and then revised and folded into *Idylls of the King* in 1869 as "The Passing of Arthur."

19*. TSE's note: "For a revelation of the Victorian mind on these matters, and of opinions to which Tennyson would probably have subscribed, see the Introduction by Sir Edward Strachey, Bt., to his emasculated edition of the *Morte D'Arthur* of Malory, still current. Sir Edward admired the *Idylls of the King*." In the "Introduction," TSE has "expurgated" for "emasculated." Strachey's edition was first published in 1868, then by Macmillan in 1889. See TSE's review of A. S. Mott's *Le Morte Darthur* (5.56), where he addresses Strachey's edition of *Morte Darthur* in relationship to Tennyson.

20. "Ulysses" (1842).

21†. In "Introduction": "Tennyson could not tell a story at all. And it is because Tennyson tried to do something he could not do, or rather tried to do with his medium of the *idyll* what can only be done by telling a story, that *The Princess* is a dull poem. It is one of the few poems of which it may be said, that it is beautiful but dull."

22†. In "Introduction": "limitations to good purpose. Of the content of *Maud* I cannot think so highly as does Mr. Humbert Wolfe in his interesting essay on Tennyson which is largely a defence of the supremacy of that poem. For me, *Maud* consists"

23†. In "Introduction": "sound false, and fail to make one's flesh creep with sincerity, as fail also the bellicose bellowings."

24. The opening lines of "Love and Duty" (1842) (153).

25†. Thus in typescript draft and "Introduction." The expanded version appearing in *EAM* had substituted "less unapproachable," probably a printer's error. Hayward's *Selected Prose* (1953) corrected the phrase, a reading which TSE confirmed by letter of 1 Sept 1959 to John Killham.

26†. In "Introduction": "a universal emotion in what could only be an English town;"

27. Hallam Tennyson introduces a lengthy discussion of his father's beliefs with the claim: "His creed, he always said, he would not formulate, for people would not understand him if he did; but he considered that his poems expressed the principles at the foundation of his faith" (vol 1, 308-09). As for the content of that faith, his son writes: "Assuredly Religion was no nebulous abstraction for him. He consistently emphasized his own belief in what he called the Eternal Truths; in an Omnipotent, Omnipresent and All-loving God, Who has revealed Himself through the human attribute of the highest self-sacrificing love; in the freedom of the human will; and in the immortality of the soul" (311). Hallam Tennyson moves closer to Trinitarian or Christological formulations only near the end of the discussion: "He had a measureless admiration for the Sermon on the Mount; and for the Parables . . . my father expressed his conviction that 'Christianity with its divine Morality but without the central figure of Christ, *the* Son of Man, would become cold . . . He disliked discussion on the Nature of Christ, 'seeing that such discussion was mostly unprofitable, for none knoweth the Son but the Father'" (vol 1, 325-26).

28†. In "Introduction": "nothing is more peculiar about that age than the friendship of its eminent people with each other." John Frederick Denison Maurice (1805-72) was an Anglican priest, liberal theologian, and founder of Christian Socialism.

29†. In "Introduction": "half a century." Darwin's study was published in 1859, nine years after *In Memoriam*.

30. First appeared in *Poems* (1842).

31†. In "Introduction," TSE had this note, here deleted: "See, in Harold Nicolson's admirable *Tennyson*, page 252 *ff.*"

32†. In "Introduction": "may all be considered as derivatives from *In Memoriam*"; James Thomson's *The City of Dreadful Night* first appeared in 1874; A. E. Housman's *A Shropshire Lad* was published in 1896.

33*†. TSE's note: "There are other kinds of despair. Davidson's great poem, 'Thirty Bob a Week,' is not derivative from Tennyson. On the other hand, there are other things derivative from Tennyson besides *Atalanta in Calydon*. Compare the poems of William Morris with *The Voyage of Maeldune*, and *Barrack Room Ballads* with several of Tennyson's later poems." In "Introduction," this paragraph in the text concluded with: "I believe that *In Memoriam* is a poem which every one should experience, live through, and pass beyond with gratitude to the author."

34. From Tennyson's "Tears, Idle Tears," in *The Princess: A Medley*, IV (1847) (287). TSE neglects the quotation marks around this stanza.

35. In "Introduction": "Man and God and Life and Death."

36. In the typescript draft, TSE's concluding paragraph continues from this point: "It is not insignificant, in this connection, that his affinity was with Virgil and the Latin poets of the Augustan Age rather than with Homer and the Greek dramatists and lyric poets. For the Latins were concerned rather with the way of saying things, and the Greeks rather with what they said. So also were the mediaeval creators of the tales arranged by Malory; which makes these tales peculiarly inappropriate for the use to which Tennyson put them. Generalisations about differences of racial genius are dangerous and should not be pushed very far. I have introduced this only to point the affirmation that there is something more here than a simple distinction of

'form' and 'content.' That which is most profound in Tennyson is what is revealed through his style; and that is as deep and as permanent as the desire to express emotion by poetry. And on the other hand it is not this alone, but its contrast with the Victorian surface to which the mind of Tennyson conformed naturally and sincerely, that makes him so great and sad a poet." At the bottom of the page, TSE has written, as an idea to be developed, "about Tennyson's later poems / his genius never left him."

37†. In "Introduction": "Tennyson's surface is intimate with his depths; what we most quickly see about Tennyson is what moves between the surface and the depths, which is of slight importance."

38†. In "Introduction": "the greatest rebel"

39†. In "Introduction," this paragraph was followed by a space and a concluding paragraph: "Tennyson is not one of those poets who flared up during youth or into middle years and then declined. To the end he could do the trick better than any one else; and if you are content to know only the poems contained in this volume, you are content not to know Tennyson fully."

40. From Swinburne's "Ave Atque Vale: In Memory of Charles Baudelaire," XVI (1868).

41. *Trans:* "singular warning." Baudelaire suffered premonitions: "Maintenant j'ai toujours le vertige, et aujourd'hui 23 janvier j'ai subi un singulier avertissement, j'ai senti passer sur moi *le vent de l'aile de l'imbécillité*." ("Now I am always dizzy, and today, the 23rd of January, I suffered a singular warning, I felt pass over me *the breeze of imbecility's wing*.") "Hygiène" *Œuvres complètes de Baudelaire* (Paris: Gallimard, 1961), 1265.

Modern Education and the Classics[1]

Questions of education are frequently discussed as if they bore no relation to the social system in which and for which the education is carried on. This is one of the commonest reasons for the unsatisfactoriness of the answers. It is only within a particular social system that a system of education has any meaning. If education today seems to deteriorate, if it seems to become more and more chaotic and meaningless, it is primarily because we have no settled and satisfactory arrangement of society, and because we have both vague and diverse opinions about the kind of society we want. Education is a subject which cannot be discussed in a void: our questions raise other questions, social, economic, financial, political. And the bearings are on more ultimate problems even than these: to know what we want in education we must know what we want in general, we must derive our theory of education from our philosophy of life. The problem turns out to be a religious problem.

One might almost speak of a *crisis* of education. There are particular problems for each country, for each civilization, just as there are particular problems for each parent; but there is also a general problem for the whole civilized world, and for the uncivilized so far as it is being taught by its civilized superiors; a problem which may be as acute in Japan, in China or in India as in Britain or Europe or America. The progress (I do not mean the extension) of education for several centuries has been from one aspect a drift, from another aspect a push; for it has tended to be dominated by the idea of *getting on*. The individual wants more education, not as an aid to the acquisition of wisdom but in order to get on; the nation wants more in order to get the better of other nations, the class wants it to get the better of other classes, or at least to hold its own against them. Education is associated therefore with technical efficiency on the one hand, and with rising in society on the other. Education becomes something to which everybody has a "right," even irrespective of his capacity; and when everyone gets it – by that time, of course, in a diluted and adulterated form – then we naturally discover that education is no longer an infallible means of getting on, and people turn to another fallacy: that of "education for leisure" – without having revised their notions of "leisure." As soon as this precious motive of

snobbery evaporates, the zest has gone out of education; if it is not going to mean more money, or more power over others, or a better social position, or at least a steady and respectable job, few people are going to take the trouble to acquire education. For deteriorate it as you may, education is still going to demand a good deal of drudgery. And the majority of people are incapable of enjoying leisure – that is, unemployment *plus* an income and a status of respectability – in any but pretty simple forms – such as balls propelled by hand, by foot, and by engines or tools of various types; in playing cards; or in watching dogs, horses or other men engage in feats of speed or skill. The uneducated man with an empty mind, if he be free from financial anxiety or narrow limitation, and can obtain access to golf-clubs, dance halls, etc., is, for all I can see, as well equipped to fill his leisure contentedly as is the educated man.

The inadequacy of most people's notions of education is revealed whenever there is any public discussion on the subject of raising the school age.[2] To dismiss as irrelevant the miserable stop-gap idea that raising the school-leaving age will diminish unemployment[3] – a mere confession of inability to solve a different problem – it is assumed by most people (and there are always a great many people ready to discuss the problem) that more education – that is to say, more years of education – would be a good thing "if the nation could afford it." Of course the nation could afford it, if it is such a good thing as all that. But no one stops to consider what is this education of which no one can have too much; or whether the society in which more of this education is a good thing is necessarily a good society. If, for instance, the "nation," or the people composing it, have only a little money, should we not assure ourselves first that our elementary education is already so good that no money could improve it, before we attempt a more ambitious programme? (Anyone who has taught children even for a few weeks knows that the size of a class makes an immense difference to the amount you can teach. Fifteen is an ideal number; twenty is the maximum; with thirty much less can be done; with more than thirty most teachers' first concern is simply to keep order, and the clever children creep at the pace of the backward.)

The first task of anyone who might be imagined as occupying a dictatorial position in the education of a country should obviously be to see that elementary education is as good as it can be made; and then proceeding forward make sure that no one received *too much* education, limiting the numbers treated to "higher education" to a third (let us say) of those

receiving that treatment today. (I do not want a dictator even in education, but it is sometimes convenient to employ a hypothetical dictator in illustration.) For one of the potential causes of deterioration of the universities is the deterioration lower down. The universities have to teach what they can to the material they can get: nowadays they even teach *English* in England. American universities, ever since Charles William Eliot and his contemporary "educators," have tried to make themselves as big as possible in a mad competition for numbers: it is very much easier to turn a little university into a big one than to reduce the size of one that has grown too big.[4] And after Eliot had taught America that a university should be as big as possible (and I have seen one that boasted an enrolment of 18,000 students – including, I must explain, evening classes)[5] America grew very rich – that is to say, it produced a considerable number of millionaires, and the next generation set itself to an equally mad programme of building, erecting within a short time a great variety of imposing, though in some places rather hastily-built, halls and dormitories and even chapels. And when you have sunk so much money in plant and equipment, when you have a very large (though not always well-paid) staff of men who are mostly married and have a few children, when you are turning out from your graduate schools more and more men who have been trained to become teachers in other universities, and who will probably want to marry and have children too; when your whole national system of higher education is designed for an age of expansion, for a country which is going indefinitely to increase its population, grow rich, and build more universities – then you will find it very difficult to retract.

What happens in America is not so irrelevant to British affairs as it is commonly taken to be. For, as I have already said, what we have to recognize is a crisis of education not in one country but in all, a crisis which has its common features everywhere. What has happened in American universities can happen in provincial universities in England; and what happens in provincial universities exerts influence on what happens in Oxford and Cambridge. We are well advanced in an age of great social changes. I do not object to that; but I think that if we admit that social change inevitably means change in our system of education, in our conceptions of *who* should be educated, and *how*, and of the still more neglected question, *why*, we shall be better able to give intelligent direction, instead of leaving education to take care of itself. It is against this shifting vast background, very important for my picture, that I would set the question of the place of the

classics in modern education. We discern three tendencies in education as in politics, the *liberal*, the *radical*, and what I am tempted to call, perhaps simply because it is my own, the *orthodox*. In using these terms about tendencies in education I do not wish to draw any close political parallel, because in politics there is no pure breed of any kind.

The *liberal* attitude towards education is that with which we are the most familiar. It is apt to maintain the apparently unobjectionable view that education is not a mere acquisition of facts, but a training of the mind as an instrument, to deal with any class of facts, to reason, and to apply the training obtained in one department in dealing with new ones. The inference is drawn that one subject is as good, for education, as another; that the student should follow his own bent, and pursue whatever subject happens most to interest him. The student who applies himself to geology, and he who applies himself to languages, may both in the end find themselves in trade: it is assumed that if they both have made the most of their opportunities, and have equal abilities, they will both be equally fitted for their vocation, and for "life." I think that the theory that the mind can be trained equally well upon any subject, and that the choice of the class of facts to acquire is indifferent, can be pushed too far. There are two kinds of subject which, at an early stage, provide but poor training for the mind. One is the subject which is concerned more with theories, and the history of theories, than with the storing of the mind with such information and knowledge as theories are built upon: such a subject, and a very popular one, is *economics*, which consists of a number of complicated and contradictory theories, a subject by no means proved to be a science, usually based on illicit assumptions, the bastard progeny of a parent it disowns, *ethics*. Even *philosophy*, when divorced from *theology* and from the knowledge of life and of ascertainable facts, is but a famishing pabulum, or a draught stimulating for a moment, leaving behind drought and disillusion. The other kind of subject which provides indifferent training is that which is too minute and particular, the relation of which to the general business of living is not made evident. And there is a third subject, equally bad as training, which does not fall into either of these classes, but which is bad for reasons of its own: the study of *English Literature* or, to be more comprehensive, the literature of one's own language.[6]

Another fallacy of liberal education is that the student who advances to the university should take up the study that interests him most. For a small number of students this is in the main right. Even at a very early stage of

school life, we can identify a few individuals with a definite inclination towards one group of studies or another. The danger for these fortunate ones is that if left to themselves they will overspecialize, they will be wholly ignorant of the general interests of human beings. We are all in one way or another naturally lazy, and it is much easier to confine ourselves to the study of subjects in which we excel. But the great majority of the people who are to be educated have no very strong inclination to specialize, because they have no definite gifts or tastes. Those who have more lively and curious minds will tend to smatter. No one can become really educated without having pursued some study in which he took no interest – for it is a part of education to *learn to interest ourselves* in subjects for which we have no aptitude.

The doctrine of studying the subject we like (and for many youths in the process of development this is often only what they like at the moment) is most disastrous for those whose interests lie in the field of modern languages or in that of history, and worst of all for those who fancy that they will become writers. For it is these people – and there are many of them – for whom the deficiency of Latin and Greek is most unfortunate. Those who have a real genius for acquiring these dead languages are few, and they are pretty likely of their own accord to devote themselves to the Classics – if they are given the opportunity. But there are many more of us who have gifts for modern languages, or for our own language, or for history, who have only a modest capacity for mastering Latin and Greek. We can hardly be expected to realize, during adolescence, that without a foundation of Latin and Greek we remain limited in our power over these other subjects.

Now while *liberalism* committed the folly of pretending that one subject is as good as another for study, and that Latin and Greek are simply *no better* than a great many others, *radicalism* (the offspring of liberalism) discards this attitude of universal toleration and pronounces Latin and Greek to be subjects of little import. Liberalism had excited superficial curiosity. Never before had so much miscellaneous information been made available to everybody, in degrees of simplification adapted to everyone's capacity for assimilation. The entertaining epitomes of Mr. H. G. Wells bear witness in their popularity;[7] new discoveries are made known to the whole world at once; and everyone knows that the universe is expanding or else it is contracting. In dissipated curiosity about such novelties great numbers of people, many of them poor and deserving, think that they are improving their minds, or passing their leisure in a praiseworthy occupation.

Radicalism then proceeds to organize the "vital issues," and reject what is not vital. A modern literary critic, who has gained considerable publicity by Marxist criticism of literature, has told us that the real men of our time are such as the Lenins, Trotskys, Gorkys and Stalins; also the Einsteins, Plancks and Hunt Morgans. To this critic *knowledge* means "primarily scientific knowledge of the world about us and of ourselves."[8] This statement might be given a respectable interpretation; but I am afraid that the critic meant only what the man in the street means. By "scientific knowledge of the world about us" he does *not* mean understanding of life. By scientific knowledge of ourselves he does *not* mean self-knowledge. In short, while liberalism did not know what it wanted of education, radicalism does know; and it wants the wrong thing.

Radicalism is, however, to be applauded for wanting something. It is to be applauded for wanting to select and eliminate, even if it wants to select and to eliminate the wrong things. If you have a definite ideal for society, then you are right to cultivate what is useful for the development and maintenance of that society, and discourage what is useless and distracting. And we have been too long without an ideal. It is a commonplace nowadays that Russian communism is a religion. Then its rulers must educate the young in the tenets of that religion. I am trying to indicate now the *fundamental* defence of Latin and Greek, not merely give you a collection of excellent reasons for studying them, reasons which you can think of for yourselves. There are two and only two finally tenable hypotheses about life: the Catholic and the materialistic. The defence of the study of the classical languages must ultimately rest upon their association with the former, as must the defence of the primacy of the contemplative over the active life. To associate the Classics with a sentimental Toryism, combination-rooms,[9] classical quotations in the House of Commons, is to give them a flimsy justification, but hardly more flimsy than to defend them by a philosophy of humanism – that is, by a tardy rearguard action which attempts to arrest the progress of liberalism just before the end of its march: an action, besides, which is being fought by troops which are already half liberalized themselves. It is high time that the defence of the Classics should be dissociated from objects which, however excellent under certain conditions and in a certain environment, are of only relative importance – a traditional public-school system, a traditional university system, a decaying social order – and permanently associated where they belong, with something permanent: the historical Christian Faith.

I do not ignore the great value which negative and obstructive forces can have. The longer the better schools and the older universities in this country (for they have pretty well given up the struggle in America) can maintain some standard of classical education, the better for those who look to the future with an active desire for reform and an intelligent acceptance of change. But to expect from our educational institutions any more positive contribution to the future would be vain. As only the Catholic and the communist know, *all* education must be ultimately religious education. I do not mean that education should be confined to postulants for the priesthood or for the higher ranks of Soviet bureaucracy; I mean that the hierarchy of education should be a religious hierarchy. The universities are too far gone in secularization, they have too long lost any common fundamental assumption as to what education is for,[10†] and they are too big. It might be hoped that they would eventually follow, or else be relegated to preservation as curious architectural remains; but they cannot be expected to lead.

It is quite possible, of course, that the future may bring neither a Christian nor a materialistic civilization. It is quite possible that the future may bring nothing but chaos or torpor. In that event, I am not interested in the future; I am only interested in the two alternatives which seem to me worthy of interest. I am only here concerned with readers who are prepared to prefer a Christian civilization, if a choice is forced upon them; and it is only upon readers who wish to see a Christian civilization survive and develop that I am urging the importance of the study of Latin and Greek. If Christianity is not to survive, I shall not mind if the texts of the Latin and Greek languages became more obscure and forgotten than those of the language of the Etruscans. And the only hope that I can see for the study of Latin and Greek, in their proper place and for the right reasons, lies in the revival and expansion of monastic teaching orders. There are other reasons, and of the greatest weight, for desiring to see a revival of the monastic life in its variety, but the maintenance of Christian education is not the least. The first educational task of the communities should be the *preservation* of education within the cloister, uncontaminated by the deluge of barbarism outside; their second, the provision of education for the laity, which should be something more than education for a place in the Civil Service, or for technical efficiency, or for social or public success. It would not be that tawdry adornment, "education for leisure." As the world at large becomes more completely secularized, the need becomes more urgent that professedly

Christian people should have a Christian education, which should be an education both for this world and for the life of prayer in this world.

NOTES

1. As printed in *SE*; first published in *EAM* (1936) and introduced in the Preface: "'Modern Education and the Classics' is the revision of an address delivered to the Classical Club of Harvard University in 1933, and hitherto unprinted" (6). TSE delivered the lecture under this title in Lowell House on 24 Apr 1933.

2. In a later essay, "Education in a Christian Society" (6.19), TSE discusses the issue of raising the school age. The school-leaving age, set by the Fisher Act of 1918, was then fourteen; the Butler Act, passed in 1944, would raise it to fifteen, though recommending a further increase to sixteen.

3. In the pages of *The Criterion*, A. L. Rowse had argued for raising the school-leaving age to fifteen, in order "to reduce the competitive surplus of workers to manageable proportions" ("The Literature of Communism: Its Origin and Theory," *Criterion* 8 [Apr 1929] 422-36; 429).

4. Charles William Eliot began his Harvard presidency during the autumn term of 1869. In the academic year preceding his arrival, there were 59 professors, teachers, and research fellows, and 1,050 students. During his last term, 1908-09, the faculty had grown to 610, and the student body stood at 3,882 (Henry James, *Charles William Eliot*, vol 2. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1930, 347).

5. Source and date of this boast are untraced, but in 1930, the University of Minnesota was fifth in the United States in terms of student enrollment, with 18,500 full-time, part-time, and summer students. Columbia University was the largest in 1930, with a total enrollment of 33,144.

6. In the latter half of the nineteenth century, the study of English literature as a field of loosely related disciplines (rhetoric, oratory, composition, grammar, and literary appreciation) came into its own by distinguishing itself from the narrow specialization of philology. Though universities oriented toward the classics, such as Oxford and Cambridge, resisted the institutionalization of English literature, by the mid-1930s courses offered by English departments were not only normal on college campuses but popular among students.

7. Though Wells's extensive bibliography of nonfiction addressed a wide range of topics, here TSE more likely refers to Rosamund Marriott Watson's *Great Thoughts from H. G. Wells* (1912), which presents a selection of pithy quotations from Wells's work.

8. Ernest Sutherland Bates, "T. S. Eliot: Leisure-Class Laureate," *Modern Monthly*, 7 (1933), 17-24. Of the identity of the "hollow men" in TSE's poem, Bates writes: "No one, whatever the opprobrious epithets he may be in the habit of applying to the creators of the new Russia, the Lenins, Trotskys, Gorkys, and Stalins, would ever think of calling them hollow or stuffed. Nor do the terms seem at all applicable to the workers in modern science, the Einsteins, Plancks, Hunt Morgans, and hundreds of others engaged in reshaping physics, biology, and the social sciences" (21). Bates quotes "Tradition and the Individual Talent" on knowledge: "Someone said: 'The dead writers are remote from us because we *know* so much more than they did.' Precisely, and they are that which we know'" (2.108). Bates then glosses this claim: "His quick retort has a characteristic verbal brilliance but entirely misses the

point. To Mr. Eliot 'knowledge' means, as he says, knowledge of dead writers; to 'Some One' it presumably meant, as to most people, primarily scientific knowledge of the world about us and of ourselves" (21).

9. At Cambridge University, combination rooms – elsewhere called common rooms – are associations of students or of dons for purposes of facilitating entertainment or socializing.

10†. In *EAM*: *for* (in italics)

Christian Sociology

A review of *Preface to a Christian Sociology*, by Cyril E. Hudson[1]

London: Allen and Unwin, 1935. Pp. 136.

The Teaching Church Review: A Journal for Students of Religion, 6 (Feb 1936) 22-23

Canon Hudson has called this book quite rightly a *preface* to Christian sociology. He has kept within the limitations of the title, and the book should serve his purpose admirably. It is comprehensive without being vague, and clear without being cut and dried, and may be offered as a primer to all Churchpeople who feel any stirring of social conscience. It not only provides a brief bibliography of further reading, but touches upon the main problems in such a way as to provoke further thought on the part of the reader.[2]

The Christian sociologist is exposed, owing to the general confusion of thought as to what his position ought to be, to one or the other of two objections, or even to both. His critics, echoing the popular demand at moments of crisis that the Church should *do* something, may consider that his proposals are too vague, or that they amount to a policy of abstention from secular affairs. Or, if they find that the Christian sociologist does make any definite proposal, they will find that he has arbitrarily committed the cause of Christianity to the success of some particular nostrum, which he may advocate in common with many who are not Christians. Canon Hudson cannot justly be accused of either of these errors. He understands quite clearly that any Christian intervention in the affairs of the world can only be valid if the theology behind it is sound; that it is dogmatic Christianity, not "liberal" Christianity, that we need; and that co-operation between Christians who have not studied the foundations of their own faith may be ineffective or positively harmful. I am glad to find also, that he is aware of the fact that any reorganisation of society on a secular basis can hardly offer, from the Christian point of view, anything more than a *negative* benefit: we expect it only to remove some of the material difficulties which stand in the way of the Christian life. Such reorganisation will, furthermore, bring about new problems. The following statement deserves to be pondered:

> With increased leisure, and the enlarged opportunities for individual self-satisfactions which it affords, will come, probably, an increasingly articulate and sustained attack upon the institution of the family and the sexual ethics of Christianity. (79)

The phrase "reorganisation of society on a secular basis" may mean two quite different things. Communism, and its perhaps only temporary opponent Fascism, demand an emotional reorganisation as well as a material one; they demand a *diversion* of the thought and emotion which the Christian offers to God alone. They are faiths to which the Christian cannot possibly adhere. The kind of secular reorganisation in which the Christian must be interested is that of a purely *rational* kind; which, by appealing only to the reason, can appeal to Christians and non-Christians alike. The Christian, in co-operating with non-Christians to endeavour to bring about such enlightened change, has to keep in mind that there is, in most men, some capacity for the love of God, and that the love which is not given to God will be given to false gods. The love which does not find its proper Object will issue in fanatical devotion to a theory, or to power, or in excessive affection to created beings, which is humanitarianism.[3] Probably, therefore, the Christian will find a fundamental difference of attitude between himself and the non-Christian with whom he co-operates, a difference which he cannot afford to forget.

As for the corporate intervention of "the Church" in the affairs of this world, I incline to believe, so far at least as the Anglican Church is concerned, that for the present the most important field of activity for the Christian sociologist is within the Church itself. The first thing is, to make all thinking Churchpeople realise that about certain questions they should come to think alike, because to these questions there must be a Christian answer; and to make Christians come to a clear understanding of the matters about which they cannot think alike with non-Christians. It is only now and then that Christians realise their responsibility in public affairs, not merely as members of the public, but as Christians. And in the problem of the relation of the Christian to the modern world, we are still far from unanimity.

It takes a great deal more brain-work to be an intelligent Christian in the modern world than it takes to be a communist. The communist is a natural product of social evolution, and the Christian is not. But I have allowed myself to proceed to such reflections only as an illustration of the thought

to which Canon Hudson's primer leads us. His book should make every reader realise, more clearly than before, the immense responsibility of being a Christian.

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. After publishing TSE's "Literature and the Modern World" (5.196), Canon Hudson invited TSE to review this new book. "I am going to be importunate!" Hudson wrote on 21 June 1935 following TSE's refusal to commit for the Oct number: "the possibility of my book being noticed by you in the Teaching Church review is too good to be missed. . . . If I may, I will postpone the notice of this book until the February number, which means that your review need not be in my hands before the end of the year." TSE agreed to write the review on 3 July and submitted it after receiving Hudson's reminder on 2 Dec to send it "by Christmas."

2. At the end of each chapter, a short section headed "For Further Reading" provides details of two or three books.

3. An allusion to St. John of the Cross's *The Ascent of Mount Carmel*, book I, chapter iv: "Hence the soul cannot be possessed of the divine union, until it has divested itself of the love of created beings." This was one of the epigraphs to *Sweeney Agonistes* (*CPP* 115 / *Poems1* [113]).

Saving the Future: Mission of the Save the Children Fund: Practical Service at Home and Abroad

The World's Children: The Official Organ of the Save the Children Fund, 16 (Mar 1936) 85-87[1]

Different kinds of charity will appeal to different temperaments. It may not be impertinent to explain why the Save the Children Fund appeals to mine, and why I think it should appeal to a variety of persons.[2] Most charities are either for domestic or for foreign purposes; and those which exist for work abroad are always likely to suffer from the prejudice that charity begins at home and that there are too many good causes near at hand in urgent need of help, and that every country should look after its own needs. But the charity that both begins and ends at home is an imperfect expression of the Christian virtue of charity. I should like to point out that the work of this Fund is a rather unusual combination of domestic and foreign aid. Its work at home, which is of primary importance, is of the most practical kind. Its chief attention is devoted in helping children from the congested metropolitan boroughs and from the depressed industrial areas, both by providing a temporary change of scene and by helping them on the spot with clothing, food and medicine.

Everyone knows that the amount of work that ought to be done in Great Britain, in the way of looking after the health of such children when they are ill, and of preserving their health and providing a happier and more hopeful childhood, far exceeds the resources of this Fund. Many people, on perceiving the great discrepancy between all that should be done, and the actual means of such a fund as this, are apt to depreciate the value of what they call more salvage work, and to think it merely delays the eventual taking over of these tasks by the Government. Now, the extent to which Government should take upon itself to supply the defects of proper domestic care – even when these defects are due neither to the negligence nor to the ignorance of parents, but to conditions of misery far beyond the parents' control – is a question which I need not take up now. My point is that I do not consider for a moment that such private charity interferes in any way with the progress of governmental care. I think that it will be found that in general it happens far more often that it is just this struggle by a

small number of devoted individuals, that calls attention to the importance of the need and brings about the public interest which results in the Government, or the community as a whole, assuming the responsibility; and the visible evidence of what can be done for the welfare of children on the limited scale possible to a private society is the best way of bringing home to the community as a whole the urgency of the problem, and of persuading it that something could be done on a much larger scale.

This society, however, is not only concerned with the establishment of small centres. Even if it were, I should suggest that there is to-day a tendency to deprecate the saving of individual souls and bodies as trifling, and to take seriously only what can be done for mankind on a large scale. A doctrine of the unimportance of the individual, which appears to be held explicitly and consistently in Russia, has affected the attitude of many people in western Europe whose traditions deny this assertion, and who should believe that every human soul is as important as every other, and that the saving of any one, or even making it possible for that one to save itself, is of infinite importance. But in any case, I would call attention to what the society has done, and by inference to the further possible expansion of its activities, in the way of meddling with public activity and legislation.

"For the enlightenment of public opinion and the improvement of conditions of child life at home and abroad," says one of its publications, "the Save the Children Fund undertakes sociological research and propaganda. The Fund was responsible, for example, for a notable enquiry into the effects of unemployment on children and young people in Great Britain, which was carried out with Government and other official co-operation in 1932-33; and representations made to the Colonial Office in 1933 in regard to certain restrictions on child welfare work in Granada led to official enquiry."[3] It is obvious that a society which attempts to watch, and to influence, the progress of legislation, needs not only considerable funds, but a large membership of persons actively interested, if it is to enjoy the prestige necessary for influencing legislators and lawgivers.

Now, as to the work abroad. It seems to me that in the long run such a society would be untrue to its principles, certainly in danger of forgetting Christian principles, if it did not interest itself in the welfare of children in other countries, especially in the emergencies created by famine, pestilence, war, persecution, and enforced migrations. There is one motive for looking after the welfare of a nation's children, which we have seen active in some other countries, and which is apt to appeal to the imagination of even most

excellent people, and it is not an exalted, certainly not a Christian motive. It is that a nation depends in time of war upon a well-developed and healthy manhood. The decay of the nation is most forcibly brought home to the imagination of many people by statistics of the proportion of applicants for the military forces or the police who cannot be recruited because they are physically unfit – many of them, I daresay, because the two things are involved, mentally unfit also. Few people are wholly unaffected by such considerations – and I am not here to discuss problems of militarism or pacifism – but in this even the disinterested motive of patriotism is powerfully reinforced by the unconscious motive of fear and self-interest: we should not feel comfortable in a town staffed with rickety policemen, or even undersized ones. I only go so far as to say that when we see no farther than our own shores and frontiers, in the matter of saving children, the motive of saving them for the wrong reason may play a large part – the motive of saving bodies without souls – and that when this motive becomes paramount, the result may be a dangerous race of healthy and aggressive barbarians. Consequently I believe that activity on behalf of suffering children of other nations is and should be an essential part of the work of this society.

In any great crisis such as those I instanced – famine, pestilence, war, persecution, and enforced migration – we have to deal with the exigencies of the moment only. We must not, at such times, exclaim that each nation should look after its own: the claim of our common humanity is too strong; we can be limited only by our financial resources, and the duty of not withdrawing at home any relief that we have been extending. But in the long run, of course, it *is* desirable that such work should be made to take root, and that the care of children everywhere should be undertaken by people of the same race and place. I would remind you that the society is one constituent of the Save the Children International Union, which is represented on committees of the League of Nations;[4] and also call attention to the significant statement that "the Government of the county of Budapest has shown its appreciation of the Save the Children day-nursery schools by commissioning their director to establish similar schools in towns and villages throughout the county."[5]

I will now pass to another division of my subject. At the common emotional level of all people of goodwill, whatever their religious or political views, and even if they have none, I suppose that the phrase "Save the Children" arouses some response, and stirs some images of imagination and memory. It appeals to those who have children, if they have any conscience,

when they think that there are other people's children who have not one of the advantages of their own; and it should appeal to the childless, in their wishing to help towards giving to other people's children what they have no children of their own to give it to.

Then there is this wider consideration also, if we ask: Why save the children? Saving the children is in its widest aspect saving everything else. Children have always the appeal of helplessness, and of all the indefinite possibilities that one sees in them, most of which are never realised: but we must think of them also as the adults of the future, for which we are responsible. In a double sense, saving the children means saving the parents also. It means saving the parents of the future, and consequently the children of the future; and in an immediate practical way it means saving the living parents of these children, when they have parents. It is often necessary, of course, to save children *from* their parents – though in the deepest theological sense no child can be wholly saved from its parents – but this can never be so right and satisfactory as saving them *with* their parents, even though we may have the means only to minister to the material needs of the mother while the children are in the most helpless stage. . . . But to remove children generally from the authority, responsibility and influence of their parents, is at best to look at it only from the children's point of view, or from the point of view of what we consider to be the children's interest. We have also to ask: Is it good for the parents? Do not parents who do no more than procreate, and who have not the task of bringing up their children afterwards, somehow remain undeveloped? We are apt to forget that the care for their own children is an important, I believe an essential means, for the development of the souls of the parents. I believe that any man or woman who has been a good parent has, in the course of bringing up his children, undergone a maturing and developing which the normal person can acquire in no other way.

There is one more aspect in which we might study this word saving. "Save" means a good many things – for instance, to rescue or protect; it also means to economise, to live frugally, hence "savings." It is connected with "salve" (from salvage), to rescue a ship, or its contents, from loss; and in our immediate context, it means both to save life, as in starvation, disease, brutality, and war; and also to save the living.[6] "Save the Children" means a great deal more than keeping them alive. To prevent preventable death of a child is a duty of natural religion, so to speak; but the more fully we use the word in a Christian sense the more meaning do we find in it.

Indeed, in a Christian sense which may at first seem antipathetic to those who do not understand it, the "saving" of those children who are going to survive, to have some sort of existence, anyway, is of greater importance than merely saving the lives of baptised children not old enough to have committed mortal sin.

I come, of course, to "saving" in the sense of *salvation*. I do not mean to give you the impression that I think the Save the Children Fund ought to be a missionary society – that is still less its function abroad than at home. Abroad, indeed, its function might sometimes be to save the lives of children that they should be brought up in the faith of their ancestors, whatever that faith was. I merely mean that we must keep in mind that "saving" is not to be limited to keeping children alive, or to seeing that they grow up healthy, or even to providing for their fullest mental development and instruction. It means also saving their souls. The activities of such a society as this are and should be very varied; and the sense in which it is able to "save children" in one place or at one time may be much more limited than in another; and what it can attempt to do here or there must be determined by considerations of what the scholastic philosophers called *prudence*:[7] but even though the actual work possible and called for may always fall short of the full meaning of the word "save," I think that it will make a vast difference whether we keep this full meaning clearly in mind or not.[8]

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. TSE's address for the benefit of the Save the Children Fund was delivered at a meeting of the charity in the Court Room at Holborn Town Hall, London, on 30 Jan 1936. He was introduced by Rev. W. C. Roberts, Rector of St. George's, Bloomsbury, who had invited him in Oct 1935 to speak in Nov. TSE replied on 16 Oct: "I sympathize warmly with the aims of the Fund, but I am afraid that it is impossible for me to fit in such a speaking engagement at such short notice. . . . I should be very glad to speak on behalf of such a cause on a later occasion, if I could have a little longer notice." Roberts said in introducing him that "there is no one who appeals more powerfully than Mr. Eliot to the younger mind to-day."

2. The Save the Children Fund, founded in London in 1919 by Eglantyne Jebb and her sister Dorothy Buxton, is an international nongovernmental organization that monitors and promotes children's rights and offers relief to children in areas of crisis.

3. Source untraced.

4. The Save the Children International Union (SCIU) was founded in 1920 in Geneva by the Save the Children Fund of London in cooperation with the Comité international de secours aux enfants of Bern. The Declaration of Children's Rights, written in 1923 by SCIU, was

adopted in 1924 by the General Assembly of the League of Nations. The League of Nations established a Committee for the Protection of Children, with Eglantyne Jebb appointed as one of the committee's two assessors.

5. The exact source of this quotation is untraced, though *The International Handbook of Child Care and Protection* (1928) offers claims similar to TSE's quotations about the charity in the United Kingdom and in Budapest. The Save the Children Fund had many worldwide publications, including *The International Handbook*, which was edited by Edward Fuller, also the editor of the journal *The World's Children*, in which TSE's essay appears. TSE had corresponded with Fuller, who likely provided him with one or more of the charity's publications.

6. TSE lists some of the definitions given in the OED.

7. In scholastic philosophy, prudence (*prudentia*) is one of the four cardinal virtues and denotes the intellectual ability to distinguish the good from the bad, especially in the concrete realm of moral action.

8. On 31 Jan, the president of the Save the Children Fund, Lord Noel-Buxton, wrote "to express my personal gratitude to you for this signal service to our work. I am more grateful because I understand that this is the first occasion on which you have ever spoken on behalf of a philanthropic society, and I am very conscious of the great influence which you have over the thoughts of the younger generation." TSE's lecture produced a sum of £35 for the fund. The published lecture was illustrated with the photograph of a bust of TSE by the sculptor Donald Hastings (see figure 7 following page 406).

The Church as Action: Note on a Recent Correspondence

The New English Weekly, 8 (19 Mar 1936) 451

I should like to rectify a small error, for the existence of which I cannot wholly disclaim responsibility. In a recent letter in your columns, Mr. Desmond Hawkins said: "If, as Mr. T. S. Eliot's Lambeth essay suggests, the Church has decided to go to earth during a new Dark Age . . ." Mr. Barlow, writing a week later, does not mention my name, but he says, apparently following Mr. Hawkins: "If in fact the Church has gone into hiding against the advent of a new dark age . . ."[1] While I was glad to see Mr. Barlow using lower case, instead of Mr. Hawkins's capitals, I am still apprehensive, because even a trifling or commonplace figure of speech may make mischief. What I wrote, in 1930, is this:

> The World is trying the experiment of attempting to form a civilized but non-Christian mentality. The experiment will fail; but we must be very patient in awaiting its collapse; meanwhile redeeming the time: so that the Faith may be preserved alive through the dark ages before us; to renew and rebuild civilization, and save the World from suicide.[2]

Obviously, the parallel which the term "dark ages" suggests, fails when it is closely applied. There is not much likeness between the situation of Christianity in Merovingian times, and its situation to-day.[3] And within whatever dates we define the "dark ages," the Church was hardly "in hiding," or "gone to earth." These terms are more aptly applied to the period of the catacombs, to which Mr. Eric Gill, in one of his books, drew a prophetic parallel.[4]

Mr. Gill's parallel is much better of the two, if one takes as sombre a view as he does. But I did not say that the Church has gone into hiding, or even that it had "decided" to "go to earth"; I did not even prophesy that it would go into hiding; I did not recommend that it should go into hiding. The Church is less in hiding than it was during most of the eighteenth century; it is less hidden, I believe, to-day than it was in 1910, in which year neither I nor Mr. Hawkins nor Mr. Barlow (had we all arrived at that date at our present state of maturity) would have been likely to be writing letters about

it. I think that it is a good sign that much more appears to be *expected* of the Church to-day than in the past. Mr. Barlow and Mr. Hawkins cannot realize the difference so well as I do; and older men still can realize it more clearly than I. And such animation as is shown in the wrangling about tithes, and a more inquisitive curiosity about the Ecclesiastical Commission, should give reason for hope rather than for despondency.[5] In mentioning tithes, it occurs to me to remark that the exhibition of the Church in the rôle of enemy of the people may as easily serve Fascist ends as Communist.

One difference which I think it is worth while to be clear about, and which has not emerged so far from the discussion in these columns, is that this subject, discussed from different points of view, is not quite the same subject. The point of view of a person really "inside" (by which I mean a regular communicant, not merely a person who has been baptized and confirmed) and that of a person outside must be different. And of those outside there are several kinds: there is the devout non-conformist, there is the person who regards Christianity with mild disapproval as an anachronism, and there is the person who regards it with hostility. And there is another type, which appears to be more recent, and more significant: it is the type of person who is not a churchman, nor even a believer, but who looks sometimes wistfully and sometimes angrily towards the Church, appealing to it to *do* something. Of such, within narrow limits, is Mr. Pound; and of such, in a wider, more sympathetic and less secular state of mind, are Mr. Hawkins and Mr. Barlow.

It makes all the difference, then, whether you regard the Church in the light of its historical vocation, and are concerned primarily with what it is *for*, or whether you merely take it in its visible form to-day, and ask what it *does*. From the first point of view, all this talk about boy scouts and tea meetings is trifling. Whether boy-scouting is good, or whether it militarizes, is a practical question: after all, something must be done for children, and if you do not approve of scouting you can try to think of something better. In congregations which consist of old ladies, tea meetings are a natural activity; and I do not see why the old ladies (some of them pretty lonely ones) should be deprived of their tea meetings. It is not their fault if they constitute the whole congregation. I think too, that people outside of the Church are apt to think of the Church as the contents of Crockford: as the actual clergy and the actual bench of Bishops.[6] I am not concerned at this point to defend either clergy or bishops, though I think outsiders are sometimes apt to measure them against a romantically high standard of holiness.

The point is that if you regard the Church first as the means of providing the Sacraments, and if you regard these Sacraments as essential, then your criticism of the Church's other activities, or of its supineness or of its weakness, will be different from the criticism of those who are not concerned with the Sacraments. I do not mean that your criticism will be less severe – it may be more severe through being better informed. I do not mean that you condone usury, or erastianism, or any of the abuses inside or outside.[7] I should like to ask certain critics of the Church: "If the Church were cleansed of all the filth you see in it, if it perfected itself so that you would have to admit that none of your criticisms still held good, what then would be your attitude towards it? Would you regard it as a beautiful and most desirable fraud, for the purpose of deluding a part of humanity for the benefit of the whole? Or would you then believe?" And if they then "believed," I should say that they were really believing something else than what the Church asks them to believe, and that they had come inside for the wrong reason – and on a most precarious basis, for they could claim the right to detach themselves again the moment the least sign of weakness or corruption recurred.

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. Desmond Hawkins's letter appeared under the heading "Christianity, Germany, and the Jews" in the *NEW* of 13 Feb 1936 (360). The letter by Kenneth Elliott Barlow (1906-2000), a medical doctor and *Criterion* contributor – whose books *The Discipline of Peace* (1942), *The State of Public Knowledge* (1946), and *A Home of their Own* (1946) were later published by Faber – was printed under the heading "Defining Christianity" two weeks later in the *NEW* of 27 Feb (400).

2. The concluding sentence of "Thoughts after Lambeth" (1931) (4.240-41). TSE also quotes the passage in the opening sentence of "The Modern Dilemma" (1933) (4.810).

3. The Merovingians were a dynasty (ca. 457-751) that ruled the Franks in a region roughly cotermimous with ancient Gaul, its borders expanding into former provinces of the Roman empire.

4. In *Money & Morals* (London: Faber, 1934), Eric Gill observes: "We are not a survival of mediaevalism. The mediaeval supremacy of the Church has not survived. We are back in the catacombs – whether we like it or not" ([59]). In "The Christian in the Modern World" (1935), TSE also noted: "That distinguished sculptor and interesting writer on social problems, Mr. Eric Gill, says that the Christians are already back in the catacombs" (5.192).

5. The role of Ecclesiastical Commissioners was to determine the distribution of revenues of the Church of England.

6. Dating back to the first edition in 1858, *Crockford's Clerical Directory* (*Crockford*) is the authoritative guide to the Anglican clergy, churches, and benefices in all of Great Britain.

7. Erastianism, named after the sixteenth-century Swiss theologian Thomas Erastus, is the doctrine that asserts the authority of the state over the church in ecclesiastical jurisdiction.

A Commentary

The Criterion: A Literary Review, 15 (Apr 1936) 458-63

I have been reading a book which, if I remember rightly, met with a good deal of critical approval when it was reviewed in London – it is an American book – some months ago: *Was Europe a Success?* by Joseph Wood Krutch, published by Methuens at 3s. 6d., with the approval on the front flap of Albert Einstein and Aldous Huxley.[1] Mr. Krutch is a thoughtful *littérateur* of considerable ability and power of persuasion; he is described by his publishers as a "liberal intellectual"; and he objects, in the name of reason and liberalism, to both fascism and communism. His objections are the substance of his book; and anyone who also objects to fascism and communism is prepared to read the book in a sympathetic state of mind. But the more I read of it, the more I became convinced that Mr. Krutch was an ally to be regarded with the gravest suspicion by anybody with any positive beliefs.

Among the characteristics of the "European man," which Mr. Krutch finds valuable,[2] and which he believes that communism would eradicate, are (1) "a sense of the reality, the worth, and the sacredness of the individual, who is thought of as having in himself a value for which there is no equivalent, not merely because he seems unique to himself but because – since every man differs somewhat from every other – he contributes something unique and possibly of value to society itself"; (2) "a sense of the importance of something which has been variously defined but always called 'freedom' for this same individual"; (3) "the tendency to regard differentiation and variety as desirable in themselves, and a consequent tendency to stress the importance of something called 'personality'"; (4) "a disposition – very different from the collectivist stress upon the importance of the common denominator – to assume that all excellences are arranged in a hierarchy, the uppermost levels of which are not only inaccessible to most but barely if at all even visible to the best and the most excellent of men" [27-28]. And another thing that Mr. Krutch is not willing to surrender without a protest is "the privilege of making free intellectual judgments, of discriminating between the true and the false, the just and the unjust, or the right and the wrong, upon some basis other than a purely partisan one" [35].

Mr. Krutch does not attempt to trace the development of these characteristics through the course of European history, or to point to any epoch at which they seem to him to have flourished most fully. Nor is he very seriously concerned with how some of these characteristics came about; if he were, he might find them developing in periods which do not meet with his approval. The combination of *all* the characteristics which he wishes to preserve hardly seems to have appeared before the Renaissance, and perhaps is best illustrated in the best society of the eighteenth century. For Mr. Krutch's "European man" is not a person who can easily be identified throughout the whole of European history. Mr. Krutch turns out to dislike Christianity quite as much as he dislikes communism: the chief difference is that Christianity is a dead issue, while communism is a menace. He does not appear to think that Christianity had very much to do with the development of European civilization, except to obstruct it; and it is largely the resemblances between Christianity and communism that make him the enemy of the latter. At any rate, he seems to be pleased to remind his communist friends that they are no more intelligent than Christians. Finding them intolerant and violent, he holds up for their admonishment the horrid example of Tertullian – in comparison with whom Plato is the "liberal";[3] finding them contemptuous of bourgeois literature, he reminds them of St. Jerome's scruples about reading Virgil;[4] and as for their theories about moulding the minds of the young, he reminds them that they were anticipated by the Jesuits.[5] As for the development of communist practice and theory, he looks forward to an age of "Byzantinism" in which they will ally practical brutality with metaphysical speculations as futile as those of the Homoousian and Homoiousian doctrines.[6]

As for the positive accomplishment of Europe in the past, Mr. Krutch admits that "one certainly cannot buy exactly what Europe bought at any price except the one paid. You could not, for example, have Dante without his bigotry" [26]. It is interesting that he should single out "bigotry" as the price paid for Dante; he does not, however, tell us, as I think he should, whether Dante was worth the price. If he was, then that rather weakens Mr. Krutch's case against the bigotry of communists: what if their kind of bigotry should produce another kind of Dante? But perhaps a price paid some centuries ago is better worth paying than one due in the immediate future; especially as Mr. Krutch can hardly expect to live to enjoy the fruits of communist culture. But what right, we ask, has Mr. Krutch to enjoy the fruits of Christian culture? Is Mr. Krutch able to re-write the history of

Europe in such a way as to show that his "European man" whom he admires was evolved and maintained in spite of Christian culture, and not by means of it? One had supposed for instance that the monasteries, however superfluous and undesirable we may think them to have become in the course of time, did during several centuries play their part in the maintenance of civilization; though their inmates may not have enjoyed what Mr. Krutch would call "freedom," or "the privilege of making free intellectual judgments" [35], which is the property of the European man.

Mr. Krutch seems to make two arbitrary simplifications. He seems to assume that "European man" either existed always, in spite of Christianity, which like communism demands a totally new man, or else that he arrived at some moment at full development, so that all we have to do is to fight for his preservation. He also assumes that communism would bring disaster by breaking "with the whole tradition of human sensibility" [49]; though as humanity seems to have survived one such break with the whole tradition of human sensibility, in the form of Christianity, some might think it capable of surviving another. He does not seem to conceive of European civilization as something that is changing all the time anyway, or of human nature as having anything permanent about it capable of surviving change: he conceives of the past as more static, and of the possible future as more revolutionary, than perhaps either is. He does not admit that some change is inevitable or necessary, and then ask whether the change in the direction of communism is the *best* direction of change. He takes all the revolutionary aspirations of his communist acquaintances at their face value, though at the same time he is ready to assure them that revolution is not worth while because it changes nothing. "[T]he poor still work hard," he says of Russia, "the masters still command, and the ruling class still enjoys whatever privileges there are. One cannot own; but one can hold office; and nothing has changed quite so much as the theory and the terminology" [69]. But in that case, perhaps it is still true that "all excellences are arranged in a hierarchy" [28]; so it may not be so unpleasant a society for Mr. Krutch after all: it is only the changeover that is unpleasant.

To some extent, in spite of his inconsistencies, Mr. Krutch may be right both ways. Society is always changing, yet the deliberate changes do not change as much as they aspire to change. Art in a communist society can hardly be more different from the forms of art in the various societies of the past, than these forms are different from each other: for the production of theories of art and the production of art according to theories, are not the

same as the production of art. Yet there may be, for others than Mr. Krutch, a good deal to worry about, whether violent and sudden changes in political organization are to be expected or not. To a mind like mine, it is sufficiently depressing to live in a world in which views which I dislike are opposed by other views which I dislike so much as I dislike Mr. Krutch's. I am already oppressed, not so much by the theory which reacts violently against "atomistic individualism," and with which, as a theory, I can feel from a Christian point of view a certain sympathy, as by the "collectivism" which I see already in existence about me, and which makes a London crowd (the members of which perhaps take pride in their individualism and their love of liberty) the sheep-like suggestible entity that it is. I object to communism quite as strongly as Mr. Krutch does, but I object equally to those who object to it from any less serious and radical a point of view than its own.

Meanwhile, obscured by the solemnity of the only event which could have rendered such an occasion insignificant, the mortal remains of Mr. Rudyard Kipling have been deposited in Westminster Abbey.[7] There can be no reasonable dissent. Burial in the Abbey can be of no value to the affrighted soul on the way to its last judgement; and it means no decision in the final court of literary merit: but it should mean that the name of the departed has some symbolic importance for the nation. And there is no doubt that the name of Kipling has such importance. What this importance is, we do not yet know: it is indeed a tribute to the many volumes in which such vast vulgarity, humanity and genius are displayed, that no critic has yet taken the measure of Kipling. It is probable that Kipling was the greatest writer of short stories in the language; I believe that in a few poems – such as *Danny Deever* – he made original contribution to the verse of the language,[8] and I am prepared to believe that in others he was a great *balladist*; and it is probable that he will be judged incapable of writing a novel. His popularity was too great for him to have any important influence, his opinions were frequently too topical to have any permanence. In literature he was perhaps uninterested: he contributed only what he wrote himself. But the best of the critical estimates of Kipling (I am thinking, for instance, of Mr. Dobrée's essay in *The Lamp and the Lute*) deal only with a part of Kipling.[9] There is a good deal in his writing which seems the work of "the unconscious"; and if he was not quite conscious of what he did, how should we immediately be wholly conscious of it? He can only be judged by those who are able to read the whole of his work, and who are capable

of entering into his *mystique*, which is something larger than a *mystique* of Empire. And, as sometimes happens with men who are fitfully under the control of inspiration, Kipling was at the mercy of a violence, an intemperance, as much less than himself as his occasional vision was greater. "It will only be possible," said Mr. Dobrée, "to give him his rightful place when the political heats of his day have become coldly historical" [65] – and when it will no longer be necessary to explain that a Kipling is not a Beaverbrook.[10]

T. S. E.

NOTES

1. The American literary and cultural critic Joseph Wood Krutch, author of *The Modern Temper* (1929) and editor of *The Nation*, wrote a series of articles there and in *Harper's* that were collected as *Was Europe a Success?* The American edition was published in New York by Farrar & Rinehart in 1934 (pp. 88) and the English edition in London by Methuen in 1935 (pp. xvii + 116), from which pagination is cited. No copy of the dust jacket has been traced; however, a roundtable on the book just before publication, with the full texts of contributions (from which the testimonial extracts were taken) by Einstein and Huxley (as well as Bertrand Russell, James Burnham, and H. L. Mencken) were published in "Was Europe a Success?" in *The Nation* of 3 Oct 1934, 373-75.

Einstein: "Your articles 'Was Europe a Success?' must make a great impression on thoughtful people. The humanitarian ideal of Europe appears indeed to be unalterably bound up with the free expression of opinion, to some extent with the free-will of the individual, with the effort toward objectivity in thought without consideration of mere utility, and with the encouragement of differences in the realm of mind and taste. I agree with you that these requirements and ideals comprise the nature of the European spirit. . . . I only know that I affirm them with my whole soul, and would find it intolerable to belong to a society which consistently denied them" (373).

Huxley: "I should like to take this opportunity of saying how admirable I think these articles are. . . . I become more and more firmly convinced of the need, *pari passu* with social planning, for individual psychological planning, for . . . the discovery of new techniques for getting the most out of the individual spirit, for enlarging the sphere of consciousness . . . Can it be done without invoking some external and absolute imperative? . . . It is remarkable . . . how many people will accept the hardships and self-denials of athletic training. It ought not to be impossible to make mental and spiritual training seem equally acceptable" (374).

2. Krutch writes: "All things considered, it is probably true that European thought and European art are superior to all others, and that the European man has been the most successful in exploring that realm of consciousness which appears to be exclusively human" (15).

3. "To compare . . . the writings of many fascists or of many communists with the writings of the now despised liberals is to be struck with a difference which seems much like the difference one perceives in passing from, say, Plato to Tertullian. The important thing is not whether Plato was right in his conclusions. The important thing is that Plato had what the modern European man calls a civilized mind, while Tertullian had what this same man would

call a barbarous one; that, in short, the one lived in a mental world where . . . fair-mindedness and detachment were tremendously important, while the other lived in a world where the only important thing was to make sure that you came out at sound doctrine and gave no comfort to the devil" (41-42).

4. "We do . . . still refuse to believe that this wicked world is composed exclusively of pomps and vanities and we are no more willing to break completely with all the past than the Roman philosopher was willing to renounce his Plato and his Virgil merely because he was offered a Bible at last. . . . Saint Jerome learned in a vision that he must cease reading Virgil or be damned; we have not yet been convinced that Economics need be a God as jealous as Jehovah" (59). St. Jerome also writes of Virgil being accused by critics of plagiarism in the *Aeneid*, which owed much to Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. See *St. Jerome's Hebrew Questions on Genesis*, trans. C. T. R. Hayward (Oxford: Clarendon, 1995).

5. Krutch asserts that the communists prepare indoctrination catechisms for the young with the "correct" answer to every question. "But no one seems to have noticed . . . that the project is the same as that adopted by the Jesuits or that the method proved ultimately ineffective when it was tried before. . . . The reformation did come . . . and individuals did still think individual thoughts" (71-72).

6. "But when [the liberal intellectual] listens to the harangues of certain revolutionists he seems to see, dreadfully foreshadowed, a period strikingly like the Byzantium epoch. . . . What seems to be promised is . . . the same rules of violence in practical life and . . . a tendency to reduce all intellectual life to a state where it is concerned with nothing except . . . the meaning of dialectical materialism – a subject which appears . . . about as meaningful, as that which had to do with the Homoousian and Homoiousian doctrines. In other words, what the liberal intellectual has come to fear is less communism or fascism as forms of society than what he feels justified in calling the Byzantine mind" (42-43). Regarding the fourth-century debates of the Council of Nicaea, homoousian doctrine ultimately prevailed, holding that the Son is of the "same substance" ("homoousios") with the Father and thus equal in status as God. An alternate doctrine, held by Arians, argued that the Son is "similar in substance" (homoiousios) to the Father but not equal in status.

7. Kipling's ashes were buried in Poets' Corner at Westminster Abbey on 23 Jan 1936, following his death on 18 Jan. The burial was overshadowed by continuing news in all newspapers of the death of King George V on 20 Jan and the funeral procession on 23 Jan from Sandringham to Westminster Hall, near the Abbey, for the 4:00 p.m. funeral. The extensive coverage of mourning and details of the procession included national and world tributes and the closing of theaters, schools, and businesses.

8. TSE first mentions and quotes from "Danny Deever" (1892) in "Kipling Redivivus" (1919) (2.33); he discusses the poem in the introduction to his edition of *A Choice of Kipling's Verse* (1941) (6.214) and includes it in the volume.

9. *The Lamp and the Lute: Studies in Six Modern Authors* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1929). In addition to the study of Kipling ([45]-65), the book includes a study of TSE (107-33).

10. Canadian-born Sir William Maxwell Aitken, Lord Beaverbrook (1879-1964), moved to England in 1910, soon meeting and befriending Bombay-born Kipling, who influenced Beaverbrook's purchase in 1911 of the large Cherkley Court estate, where the two families enjoyed a close relationship. A member of the Conservative Party and owner of the *Daily*

Express, which he used to advocate protectionism, Beaverbrook was raised to the peerage in 1917. Kipling advised him on speeches, consulted him on financial matters, and was godfather to his second son; their friendship came to an abrupt and permanent end in Dec 1920 after Beaverbrook supported the Irish treaty to establish the Irish Free State and guarantee the separate existence of Ulster, a treaty that Kipling violently opposed.

The Church as Action [II]

To the Editor of *The New English Weekly*

The New English Weekly, 8 (9 Apr 1936) 523

Sir, – I should be better contented with Mr. Barlow's letter in your issue of April 2, if it had been written *before* instead of *after* mine; for I fear that by telling him what not to think, I have led him to think it. I do sympathize with Mr. Barlow's complaint; and I am not undertaking to defend contemporary ecclesiastics.[1] But even if all his objections are valid, they are still quite irrelevant to one's decision to become a member of the Church or stay outside. This decision, on the other hand, does have a bearing on one's criticism of the Church.

I do not know where Mr. Barlow is looking for his "focal points." Cathedral precincts are not necessarily such foci. I should have thought that every thoughtful and intelligent layman might be a focal point; and incidentally that Mr. Barlow had the native capacity, only needing improvement by study, to become a focal point himself.

The Church, we might remember, consists not only of the living but of the dead. But at what period, I wonder, was the visible Church pure enough for Mr. Barlow to have been a member of it? Would the Apostolical Succession be more genuine, the Sacraments more valid, if the visible Church were all that we should like it to be? I shall not be so disrespectful to Mr. Barlow's intelligence as to believe that he could be converted by such flimsy reasons as he pretends.

If I understand the quotation from Professor Macmurray ("to apprehend man we need religion") I should say that the reply should be: "*what* religion"? And I doubt whether Professor Macmurray will provide a satisfactory answer.[2]

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. In response to TSE's "The Church as Action: Note on a Recent Correspondence" in the *NEW* of 19 Mar (5.355), Barlow wrote that he would like to join issue with TSE "on one word – that is the word '*do*.' . . . My point is not that the church is 'doing something' for children or that it is catering for lonely women – it is rather that the Church is doing nothing but these things.

I understand the impropriety of judging the body of the Church by the action of its individual members but as a living Church I should expect that at focal points there would exist men preoccupied with essentially religious activities" (*NEW*, 2 Apr), 503.

2. Barlow writes: "In our present culture there appears to me one thing that is neglected. That one thing is man – his human situation and his qualities as a person. I know of no one who has stated this more succinctly than Prof. John Macmurray – 'To apprehend man we need religion.' This the Church does not offer" (503).

The Church as Action [III]

To the Editor of *The New English Weekly*

The New English Weekly, 9 (23 Apr 1936) 38

Sir, – Mr. Desmond Hawkins's admirable letter in your issue of April 9th leaves me in some doubt as to what the subject of controversy is.[1] I had assumed (though this was not the point on which my contribution turned) that Mr. Hawkins and Mr. Barlow, like some other critics, complained of the lack of interest of churchmen in social affairs. But I am wholly in agreement with Mr. Hawkins in his objection to "those who frankly use their ordainment as an instrument solely for social welfare and humanistic activities" [523]. That the clergy, both high and low, should take an active interest in social reforms (and I include reforms more drastic than such as slum-clearance) is most desirable; but they should bring to this activity the results of specifically *theological* study and reflection. A man can be, I admit, a useful parish priest without either the greatest theological capacity or the highest theological attainments; but for such people there ought to be a recognized body of scholars to provide his doctrines for him. In one way we have not enough theology, and in another we have too much.

The present state of the Church, in these matters, is indicated by the publishers' advertisement of a book of some merit by a clergyman advertized as "left-wing Modernist." (This advertisement is not on the jacket, but opposite the title page in the book.) The publishers say that their author,

> owing to fortunate financial circumstances for which he can claim no personal credit, is exceptionally indifferent to ecclesiastical opinion, so that the reader may feel entire confidence that, in the chapters which follow, he is being treated with complete candour.[2]

What an admission! and how significant, whether justified or not! That publishers can recommend a book by a priest on the ground that the author is independent – and for *financial* reasons! – of ecclesiastical discipline, indicates that the conception of the nature of the *Church* has almost disappeared. And indeed, what we are apt to feel when one or another eminent ecclesiastic speaks his mind on some matter of the day, is that we are being

given, not the view of *the Church*, but that of an individual whose public position is such that he is able to command half a column in *The Times*. From our Judicial System we expect more than that.

It is possible that if the Church had been represented continuously by men who both understood and fearlessly maintained the right view of the function of the Church, Mr. Hawkins might have been continuously a Christian in a Christian ambience. I do not think, however, that that exonerates him from making up his own mind and assuming the full responsibility for it.

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. Desmond Hawkins's letter is the first of three printed under the heading "The Church as Action" in the *NEW*, 8 (9 Apr 1936), 522-23.

2. J. C. Hardwick, *What to Believe* (London: Simpkin Marshall, 1935), [2]. TSE has added "financial" to the publishers' advertisement. He had discussed Hardwick's essay "The Intellectuals in Retreat" in his *Criterion* "Commentary" for Oct 1935 (5.275-76).

G. K. Chesterton

The Tablet, 167 (20 June 1936) 785

I never met Gilbert Chesterton, and my acquaintance with him was limited to a little formal correspondence on one or two occasions, either about a contribution I wanted from him or about some book I sent him;[1] but his disappearance, from a world such as that we live in, is one of those which give even to us who did not know the man, a sense of personal loss and isolation.

The notices that I have seen in the general Press seem to me to have exaggerated Chesterton's achievements in some obvious respects, and to have ignored his achievements in much more important ones. His poetry was first-rate journalistic balladry, and I do not suppose that he took it more seriously than it deserved.[2] He reached a high imaginative level with *The Napoleon of Notting Hill*, and higher with *The Man Who Was Thursday*, romances in which he turned the Stevensonian fantasy to more serious purpose. His book on Dickens seems to me the best essay on that author that has ever been written.[3] Some of his essays can be read again and again; though of his essay-writing as a whole, one can only say that it is remarkable to have maintained such a high average with so large an output. But it is not, I think, for any piece of writing in particular that Chesterton is of importance, but for the place that he occupied, the position that he represented, during the better part of a generation. And when I say "place" or "position" I attach significance also to his development, to his beginnings as well as to his ends, and to the movement from one to the other.

To judge Chesterton on his "contributions to literature," then, would be to apply the wrong standards of measurement. It is in other matters that he was importantly and consistently on the side of the angels. Behind the Johnsonian fancy-dress,[4] so reassuring to the British public, he concealed the most serious and revolutionary designs – concealing them by exposure, as his anarchist conspirators chose to hold their meetings on a balcony in Leicester Square.[5] (The real Johnson, indeed, with his theology, politics and morals, would be quite as alien to the modern world of public opinion as Chesterton himself.) Even if Chesterton's social and economic ideas appear to be totally without effect, even if they should be demonstrated to

be wrong – which would perhaps only mean that men have not the goodwill to carry them out – they were *the* ideas for his time that were fundamentally Christian and Catholic.[6] He did more, I think, than any man of his time – and was able to do more than anyone else, because of his particular background, development and abilities as a public performer – to maintain the existence of the important minority in the modern world. He leaves behind a permanent claim upon our loyalty, to see that the work that he did in his time is continued in ours.

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. TSE wrote to Chesterton, who died on 14 June, on several occasions between 1928 and 1930, primarily with regard to his essay "Is Humanism a Religion?," printed in the *Criterion* of Apr 1929. On 8 Mar 1929, TSE sent him a copy of his recent essays, presumably *For Lancelot Andrewes* (*L4* 463), and on 19 Feb 1930, he sent him Frank Morison's book *Who Moved the Stone?* (1930) soliciting his opinion on it.

2. His obituary in the *Times* of 15 June stated: "As a poet his output was constant; epigrams and satire came to him as readily as epic; there were both sonority and fine imagination in his best poems" (17).

3. *The Napoleon of Notting Hill* (1904); *The Man Who Was Thursday: A Nightmare* (1908). Chesterton's *Charles Dickens: A Critical Study* (1906) was on TSE's reading list in his Syllabus for a Tutorial Class in Modern English Literature (1916) (1.481). In his letter to Chesterton of 8 May 1929, expressing the desire to meet him in the summer, TSE wrote: "Your study of Dickens was always a delight to me" (*L4* 493). TSE discussed Chesterton, including *The Man Who Was Thursday*, in his 1933 Harvard lectures for English 26 (4.763-67).

4. Chesterton liked dressing up as Samuel Johnson. His obituary in the *Times* of 15 June stated: "his massive figure became the butt of the cartoonist, and with complete good nature he enjoyed, as when he appeared as Dr. Johnson, lending himself in a purely bodily capacity for the purposes of public entertainment" (17). Chesterton's play *The Judgment of Dr. Johnson* was published in 1927.

5. In chapter V of *The Man Who Was Thursday* (Bristol: J. W. Arrowsmith, 1908), the Secretary of the Anarchist Council, known as Monday, proposes to the protagonist Gabriel Syme: "For now we flaunt ourselves before the public. We have our breakfast on a balcony – on a balcony, if you please – overlooking Leicester Square" (91).

6. Chesterton was a proponent of distributism, an economic philosophy based on the principles of Catholic social teaching, which affirmed the right of all individuals to own property. In "Political Theorists" (1927), an omnibus review that included Hilaire Belloc's *The Servile State* (1912; 3rd ed. 1927) and Chesterton's *The Outline of Sanity* (1926), TSE wrote that "one has much sympathy with the Belloc-Chesterton gospel of Distributive Property" (3.139).

Milton I[1*]

While it must be admitted that Milton is a very great poet indeed, it is something of a puzzle to decide in what his greatness consists. On analysis, the marks against him appear both more numerous and more significant than the marks to his credit. As a man, he is antipathetic. Either from the moralist's point of view, or from the theologian's point of view, or from the psychologist's point of view, or from that of the political philosopher, or judging by the ordinary standards of likeableness in human beings, Milton is unsatisfactory. The doubts which I have to express about him are more serious than these. His greatness as a poet has been sufficiently celebrated, though I think largely for the wrong reasons, and without the proper reservations. His misdeeds as a poet have been called attention to, as by Mr. Ezra Pound, but usually in passing.[2] What seems to me necessary is to assert at the same time his greatness – in that what he could do well he did better than any one else has ever done[3†] – and the serious charges to be made against him, in respect of the deterioration – the peculiar kind of deterioration – to which he subjected the language.

Many people will agree that a man may be a great artist, and yet have a bad influence. There is more of Milton's influence in the badness of the bad verse of the eighteenth century than of anybody's else: he certainly did more harm than Dryden and Pope, and perhaps a good deal of the obloquy which has fallen on these two poets, especially the latter, because of their influence, ought to be transferred to Milton.[4] But to put the matter simply in terms of "bad influence" is not necessarily to bring a serious charge: because a good deal of the responsibility, when we state the problem in these terms, may devolve on the eighteenth-century poets themselves for being such bad poets that they were incapable of being influenced except for ill. There is a good deal more to the charge against Milton than this; and it appears a good deal more serious if we affirm that Milton's poetry could *only* be an influence for the worse, upon any poet whatever. It is more serious, also, if we affirm that Milton's bad influence may be traced much farther than the eighteenth century, and much farther than upon bad poets: if we say that it was an influence against which we still have to struggle.

There is a large class of persons, including some who appear in print as critics, who regard any censure upon a "great" poet as a breach of the peace, as an act of wanton iconoclasm, or even hoodlumism. The kind of derogatory criticism that I have to make upon Milton is not intended for such persons, who cannot understand that it is more important, in some vital respects, to be a *good* poet than to be a *great* poet; and of what I have to say I consider that the only jury of judgment is that of the ablest poetical practitioners of my own time.

The most important fact about Milton, for my purpose,[5†] is his blindness. I do not mean that to go blind in middle life is itself enough to determine the whole nature of a man's poetry. Blindness must be considered in conjunction with Milton's personality and character, and the peculiar education which he received. It must also be considered in connexion with his devotion to, and expertness in, the art of music. Had Milton been a man of very keen senses – I mean of *all* the five senses – his blindness would not have mattered so much. But for a man whose sensuousness, such as it was, had been withered early by book-learning, and whose gifts were naturally aural, it mattered a great deal.[6] It would seem, indeed, to have helped him to concentrate on what he could do best.

At no period is the visual imagination conspicuous in Milton's poetry. It would be as well to have[7†] a few illustrations of what I mean by visual imagination. From *Macbeth*:

> This guest of summer,
> The temple-haunting martlet, does approve,
> By his loved mansionry, that the heaven's breath
> Smells wooingly here: no jutty, frieze,
> Buttress, nor coign of vantage, but this bird
> Hath made his pendent bed and procreant cradle:
> Where they most breed and haunt, I have observed,
> The air is delicate.[8]

It may be observed that such an image, as well as another familiar quotation from a little later in the same play,

> Light thickens; and the crow
> Makes wing to the rooky wood[9]

not only offer something to the eye, but, so to speak, to the common sense. I mean that they convey the feeling of being in a particular place at a

particular time. The comparison with Shakespeare offers another indication of the peculiarity of Milton. With Shakespeare, far more than with any other poet in English, the combinations of words offer perpetual novelty; they enlarge the meaning of the individual words joined: thus "procreant cradle," "rooky wood." In comparison, Milton's images do not give this sense of particularity, nor are the separate words developed in significance. His language is, if one may use the term without disparagement, *artificial* and *conventional*.

O'er the smooth enameld green . . .[10]

. . . paths of this drear wood,
The nodding horror of whose shady brows
Threats the forlorn and wandering passenger.[11]

("Shady brow" here is a diminution of the value of the two words from their use in the line from *Dr. Faustus*

Shadowing more beauty in their airy brows.)[12]

The imagery in *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso* is all general:

While the ploughman near at hand,
Whistles o'er the furrowed land,
And the milkmaid singeth blithe,
And the mower whets his scythe,
And every shepherd tells his tale
Under the hawthorn in the dale.[13]

It is not a particular ploughman, milkmaid, and shepherd that Milton sees (as Wordsworth might see them); the sensuous effect of these verses is entirely on the ear, and is joined to the concepts of ploughman, milkmaid, and shepherd. Even in his most mature work, Milton does not infuse new life into the word, as Shakespeare does.

The sun to me is dark
And silent as the moon,
When she deserts the night
Hid in her vacant interlunar cave.[14]

Here *interlunar* is certainly a stroke of genius, but is merely combined with "vacant" and "cave," rather than giving and receiving life from them. Thus

it is not so unfair, as it might at first appear, to say that Milton writes English like a dead language. The criticism has been made with regard to his involved syntax. But a tortuous style, when its peculiarity is aimed at precision (as with Henry James), is not necessarily a dead one; only when the complication is dictated by a demand of verbal music, instead of by any demand of sense.

> Thrones, dominations, princedoms, virtues, powers,
> If these magnific titles yet remain
> Not merely titular, since by decree
> Another now hath to himself engrossed
> All power, and us eclipsed under the name
> Of King anointed, for whom all this haste
> Of midnight march, and hurried meeting here,
> This only to consult how we may best
> With what may be devised of honours new
> Receive him coming to receive from us
> Knee-tribute yet unpaid, prostration vile,
> Too much to one, but double how endured,
> To one and to his image now proclaimed?[15]

With which compare:

> However, he didn't mind thinking that if Cissy should prove all that was likely enough their having a subject in common couldn't but practically conduce; though the moral of it all amounted rather to a portent, the one that Haughty, by the same token, had done least to reassure him against, of the extent to which the native jungle harboured the female specimen and to which its ostensible cover, the vast level of mixed growths stirred wavingly in whatever breeze, was apt to be identifiable but as an agitation of the latest redundant thing in ladies' hats.[16]

This quotation, taken almost at random from *The Ivory Tower*, is not intended to represent Henry James at any hypothetical "best," any more than the noble passage from *Paradise Lost* is meant to be Milton's hypothetical worst. The question is the difference of intention, in the elaboration of styles both of which depart so far from lucid simplicity. The sound, of course, is never irrelevant, and the style of James certainly depends for its effect a good deal on the sound of a voice, James's own, painfully explaining. But the complication, with James, is due to a determination not to

simplify, and in that simplification lose any of the real intricacies and by-paths of mental movement; whereas the complication of a Miltonic sentence is an active complication, a complication deliberately introduced into what was a previously simplified and abstract thought. The dark angel here is not *thinking* or conversing, but making a speech carefully prepared for him; and the arrangement is for the sake of musical value, not for significance. A straightforward utterance, as of a Homeric or Dantesque character, would make the speaker very much more real to us; but reality is no part of the intention. We have in fact to read such a passage not analytically, to get the poetic impression. I am not suggesting that Milton has no idea to convey which he regards as important: only that the syntax is determined by the musical significance, by the auditory imagination, rather than by the attempt to follow actual speech or thought. It is at least more nearly possible to distinguish the pleasure which arises from the *noise*, from the pleasure due to other elements, than with the verse of Shakespeare, in which the auditory imagination and the imagination of the other senses are more nearly fused, and fused together with the thought. The result with Milton is, in one sense of the word, *rhetoric*. That term is not intended to be derogatory. This kind of "rhetoric" is not necessarily bad in its influence; but it may be considered bad in relation to the historical life of a language as a whole.[17†] I have said elsewhere that the living English which was Shakespeare's became split up into two components one of which was exploited by Milton and the other by Dryden.[18] Of the two, I still think Dryden's development the healthier, because it was Dryden who preserved, so far as it was preserved at all, the tradition of conversational language in poetry: and I might add that it seems to me easier to get back to healthy language from Dryden than it is to get back to it from Milton. For what such a generalization is worth, Milton's influence on the eighteenth century was much more deplorable than Dryden's.

If several very important reservations and exceptions are made, I think that it is not unprofitable to compare Milton's development with that of James Joyce.[19†] The initial similarities are musical taste[20†] and abilities, followed by musical training, wide and curious knowledge, gift for acquiring languages, and remarkable powers of memory perhaps fortified by defective vision. The important difference is that Joyce's imagination is not naturally of so purely auditory a type as Milton's. In his early work, and at least in part of *Ulysses*, there is visual and other imagination of the highest kind; and I may be mistaken in thinking that the later part of *Ulysses*

shows a turning from the visible world to draw rather on the resources of phantasmagoria. In any case, one may suppose that the replenishment of visual imagery during later years has been insufficient; so that what I find in *Work in Progress* is an auditory imagination abnormally sharpened at the expense of the visual.[21] There is still a little to be seen, and what there is to see is worth looking at. And I would repeat that with Joyce this development seems to me largely due to circumstances: whereas Milton may be said never to have seen anything. For Milton, therefore, the concentration on sound was wholly a benefit. Indeed, I find, in reading *Paradise Lost*, that I am happiest where there is least to visualize. The eye is not shocked in his twilit Hell as it is in the Garden of Eden, where I for one can get pleasure from the verse only by the deliberate effort not to visualize Adam and Eve and their surroundings.

I am not suggesting any close parallel between the "rhetoric" of Milton and the later style of Joyce. It is a different music; and Joyce always maintains some contact with the conversational tone. But it may prove to be equally a blind alley for the future development of the language.[22†]

A disadvantage of the rhetorical style appears to be, that a dislocation takes place, through the hypertrophy of the auditory imagination at the expense of the visual and tactile, so that the inner meaning is separated from the surface, and tends to become something occult, or at least without effect upon the reader until fully understood. To extract everything possible from *Paradise Lost*, it would seem necessary to read it in two different ways, first solely for the sound, and second for the sense. The full beauty of his long periods can hardly be enjoyed while we are wrestling with the meaning as well; and for the pleasure of the ear the meaning is hardly necessary, except in so far as certain key-words indicate the emotional tone of the passage. Now Shakespeare, or Dante, will bear innumerable readings, but at each reading all the elements of appreciation can be present. There is no interruption between the surface that these poets present to you and the core. While, therefore, I cannot pretend to have penetrated to any "secret" of these poets, I feel that such appreciation of their work as I am capable of points in the right direction; whereas I cannot feel that my appreciation of Milton leads anywhere outside of the mazes of sound. That, I feel, would be the matter for a separate study, like that of Blake's prophetic books;[23] it might be well worth the trouble, but would have little to do with my interest in the poetry. So far as I perceive anything, it is a glimpse of a theology that I find in large part repellent,

expressed through a mythology which would have better been left in the Book of *Genesis*, upon which Milton has not improved. There seems to me to be a division, in Milton, between the philosopher or theologian and the poet;[24] and, for the latter, I suspect also that this concentration upon the auditory imagination leads to at least an occasional levity. I can enjoy the roll of

> . . . Cambalu, seat of Cathaian Can
> And Samarchand by Oxus, Temir's throne,
> To Paquin of Sinaean kings, and thence
> To Agra and Lahor of great Mogul
> Down to the golden Chersonese, or where
> The Persian in Ecbatan sate, or since
> In Hispahan, or where the Russian Ksar
> In Mosco, or the Sultan in Bizance,
> Turchestan-born . . . ,[25]

and the rest of it, but I feel that this is not serious poetry, not poetry fully occupied about its business, but rather a solemn game. More often, admittedly, Milton uses proper names in moderation, to obtain the same effect of magnificence with them as does Marlowe – nowhere perhaps better than in the passage from *Lycidas*:

> Whether beyond the stormy Hebrides,
> Where thou perhaps under the whelming tide
> Visit'st the bottom of the monstrous world;
> Or whether thou to our moist vows deny'd,
> Sleep'st by the fable of Bellerus old,
> Where the great vision of the guarded Mount
> Looks toward Namancos and Bayona's hold . . .[26]

than which, for the single effect of grandeur of sound, there is nothing finer in poetry.

I make no attempt to appraise the "greatness" of Milton in relation to poets who seem to me more comprehensive and better balanced; it has seemed to me more fruitful for the present to press the parallel between *Paradise Lost* and *Work in Progress*; and both Milton and Joyce are so exalted in their own kinds, in the whole of literature, that the only writers with whom to compare them are writers who have attempted something very different. Our views about Joyce, in any case, must remain at the present time tentative. But there are two attitudes both of which are necessary

and right to adopt in considering the work of any poet. One is when we isolate him, when we try to understand the rules of his own game, adopt his own point of view: the other, perhaps less usual, is when we measure him by outside standards, most pertinently by the standards of language and of something called Poetry, in our own language and in the whole history of European literature. It is from the second point of view that my objections to Milton are made: it is from this point of view that we can go so far as to say that, although his work realizes superbly one important element in poetry, he may still be considered as having done damage to the English language from which it has not wholly recovered.

NOTES

1*. TSE's note: "Contributed to *Essays and Studies* of The English Association, Oxford University Press, 1936." As printed in *OPP*; originally begun as a lecture, "The Verse of John Milton" delivered on 21 Apr 1933 in the McMillin Theatre at Columbia University (see 4.826-27 for an account of its presentation). Although that lecture does not survive, three years later TSE gave a lecture with a similar title, "A Note on the Verse of John Milton" to the English Association, subsequently published in their *Essays and Studies* 21 (July 1936), [32]-40, and collected in *OPP* (1957) as "Milton I." Minor variants between the two published versions are noted by daggers. In 1947, TSE revisited the topic in a lecture to the British Academy. This later lecture was published as a pamphlet entitled *Milton* (1947), then collected as "Milton II" in *OPP* and placed directly after "Milton I."

2. In the first of his two-part essay "The Renaissance," *Poetry* 5.5 (Feb 1915), Pound insists that "Milton is the worst sort of poison. He is a thorough-going decadent in the worst sense of the term. If he had stopped after writing the short poems one might respect him. The definite contribution in his later work consists in his developing the sonority of the English blank-verse paragraph" (231). Pound also makes several critical remarks about Milton in *ABC of Reading*, 1934 (New York: New Directions, 1960): "When Milton writes 'Him who disobeys me disobeys' he is, quite simply, doing wrong to his mother tongue. He meant 'Who disobeys him, disobeys me.' It is perfectly easy to understand WHY he did it, but his reasons prove that Shakespeare and several dozen other men were better poets. Milton did it because he was chock a block with Latin. He had studied his English not as a living language, but as something subject to theories" (51). And later in the text: "The gross and utter stupidity and obtuseness of Milton was never more apparent than in his supercilious reference to 'Woodnotes wild'" (103).

3†. In *Essays and Studies*: "has ever done it"

4. For TSE's cataloging of Arnold's, Pater's, and Hazlitt's censures against Dryden and Pope, see "John Dryden" (1921). Defending Dryden against Hazlitt's charge of artificiality, TSE asserts that it is not Dryden, but Milton, who is "our greatest master of the *artificial* style" (2.353-54).

5†. In *Essays and Studies*: "purposes"

6. Milton enrolled at Christ's College, Cambridge, in 1625. He was unpopular with his peers but excelled in his studies. After receiving his M.A. in 1632, Milton retreated to the countryside to pursue a course of independent study during which he composed several of his most famous

works, including *L'Allegro*, *Il Penseroso*, *Comus*, and *Lycidas*. By the early 1650s, Milton had gone completely blind.

7†. In *Essays and Studies*: "give"

8. *Macbeth* I.vi.3-10

9. *Macbeth* III.ii.50-51

10. *Arcades*, line 84. *The Poetical Works of John Milton*, ed. H. C. Beeching (London: Oxford UP, 1928), TSE selectively modernizes the spelling of this and all subsequent quotations from this edition, which is in TSE's library with his bookplate. Punctuation has been silently corrected to Beeching, except for Milton's capitalization and italicization conventions, which TSE generally ignores.

11. *Comus: A Maske Presented at Ludlow Castle*, ll. 37-39

12. Valdes to Faustus, line 155; *The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus* in *The Plays of Christopher Marlowe* (London: Dent, 1916), 124. TSE owned this edition, which bears his signature and marginalia. He quoted this line in "Christopher Marlowe" (1919) (2.99).

13. *L'Allegro*, ll. 63-68

14. *Samson Agonistes*, ll. 86-89

15. *Paradise Lost* V. 769-81

16. Henry James, *The Ivory Tower*, ed. Percy Lubbock (London: Collins, 1917), 257. TSE reviewed this edition of James's posthumously published novel under the pseudonym Enrique Gomez in Jan 1918 (1.653).

17†. In *Essays and Studies*: "not necessarily bad in itself, though likely to be bad in its influence; and it may be considered bad"

18. In "Dryden the Poet" (1931), TSE writes: "The English language as left by Shakespeare, and . . . Milton, was a language like the club of Hercules, which no lesser strength could yield; so I believe that the language after Shakespeare and Milton could only have deteriorated until some genius appeared as great as they. . . . It was Dryden, more than any other individual, who formed a language possible for the mediocrity, and yet possible for later great writers to do great things with" (4.271).

19†. In *Essays and Studies*: "Mr. James Joyce" here; "Mr. Joyce" *passim*

20†. In *Essays and Studies*: "strong musical tastes"

21. After publishing *Ulysses* (1922), Joyce spent almost two decades crafting "Work in Progress," which appeared serially before Faber published it as *Finnegans Wake* in 1939. In 1933, TSE taught both *Ulysses* and "Work in Progress" extensively in English 26, a contemporary literature course at Harvard. His lecture notes include his intention to discuss "Joyce and Milton" together for a section of the class entitled "Joyce and Lawrence [III]" (4.788-90).

22†. In *Essays and Studies*: "But it may prove to be equally a blind alley for the future development of the language: being preferable to Milton's, in the respect that it cannot be imitated."

23. TSE discusses the prophetic books in "The Mysticism of Blake" (1927) (3.241-42).

24. In "Poetry and Propaganda" (1930), TSE remarks, "In Milton it is much easier to separate the greatness of the poetry from the thought, serious as it is, behind that poetry. . . . [I]n reading Milton we are I think rapt by the splendid verse without being tempted to believe the philosophy or theology" (4.027).

25. *Paradise Lost* XI. 388-96

26. ll. 156-62

A Commentary

The Criterion: A Literary Review, 15 (July 1936) 663-68

There would seem to be no subject today on which more words can more easily be expended to less purpose, than that of the ethics of War and Peace. Waves of discussion rise and fall in the correspondence columns. Neither the musterings of Canon Sheppard, nor the downright knot-cutting of the Bishop of Durham, nor Mr. Aldous Huxley's quotations of Lactantius and Tertullian, get us any forwarder.[1] With all respect to Bishop Southwell, we cannot feel sure that the XXXVIIth Article of Religion is the perfect salve for Christian consciences; nor does the Bishop of Durham's development of this theme lead us to anything but confusion.[2] The latter Bishop points out, what nobody can dispute if the terms here combined have any meaning, that in a *just* war Christians may engage. Then he adds: "Every man must decide for himself whether a war is, or is not, 'just,' and, of course, he must follow his conscience at all hazards." Unfortunately, very few people are ever in a position to be possessed of adequate knowledge to be able to decide whether a particular war is "just." A man may even conscientiously decide, as a private individual, that it is his duty at a moment of crisis to participate in an "unjust" war. A war may become unjust after it has started, or it may appear unjust in retrospect in the light of an unjust peace. The Bishop seems to have a pretty good idea, for himself, of what a just war is; for he believes that "in the present state of the world, 'just' wars are but too likely to break out." He apparently regrets "the desertion of the Abyssinians" – regrets, it would seem, that an opportunity for a "just" war has been missed; though in the next breath he has only praise for the policy pursued by the Prime Minister and Mr. Eden.[3] He comes, I do not quite see how, to this conclusion: "I hold, therefore, that it is the quite evident duty of English Christians to support the Government in whatever efforts and sacrifices that policy may involve." What does he mean by "efforts and sacrifices"? If this phrase is a euphemism for "war" (with one country or another), then which comes first: the "quite evident duty" to support the Government, or the duty, previously enjoined by the Bishop, of every man to "follow his conscience at all hazards"? And if the Bishop falls back, as he does, on the Latin text of the XXXVIIth Article, are there not two

interpretations of *licet* ("it is lawful") possible?[4] Surely it is possible for the Latin or even the English to mean, merely that a thing is *permissible*, without being (as the Bishop seems to take it) *obligatory*. The former meaning seems, according to dictionaries, to be more primitive and radical. I have found no guidance in the Bishop of Durham's letter.

Nothing, indeed, seems to me less likely of fulfilment than the Bishop's prediction of an epidemic of just wars. I cannot agree with those who maintain that no war can be just: for a just war seems to me perfectly conceivable. But in practice, if we refuse to consider the causes, and consider a war only at the moment when it breaks out, there is likely to be a good deal of justice on both sides: and if we do consider its causes, we are likely to find a good deal of injustice on both sides. The believer in just war is in danger of inferring, at the moment when war is seen to be inevitable, that that war is necessarily just; on the other hand the person who sees clearly the injustice behind the war may be equally in error in assuming that because the war is unjust, he is justified in refusing to take part in it. And it is almost impossible to say anything about the subject without being misunderstood by one or both parties of *simplifiers*. (Yet Aeschylus, at least, understood that it may be a man's duty to commit a crime, and to accomplish his expiation for it.)[5] The whole notion of justice is travestied when we draw too sharp a distinction between war and peace. If we gave enough thought and effort to the institution of justice during the condition of "peace," we might not need to exercise our consciences so violently in anticipation of war. The economic causes are the most accessible and the most amenable; even though they are only abstractions from the general stupidity and sinfulness of mankind. The problem of conscience towards war is far too deeply rooted in the general problem of evil to be settled by letters to *The Times*.

Both supporters and opponents of the Tithe Bill seem to have overlooked an important consequence of this reform.[6] Those who have prepared the Bill and those who have supported it are actuated, I suppose, by the desire to find the readiest compromise in removing a definite grievance; those who oppose the Bill are filled with natural indignation about the hardships to be inflicted upon a large number of the clergy. The greater part of the public, I suspect, regards the whole matter as a curiosity of no practical interest to any people except clergy and tithe-payers. No doubt much has been said in the press that has not come my way; but in all that

I have read I have only found one sentence that goes to the root of the matter. It occurs in a letter by Lord Selborne in *The Times* of 4th May:

> It is an admitted fact that owing to the great depression of agriculture there are some landowners to whom the payment of tithe today is a very serious financial difficulty, but it is in my opinion very unwise for any landowner to do any injury to tithe as a property, which is not absolutely necessary, because in the eyes of the law no landowner has a better property in his land than the tithe-owner has in his tithe, and in these days there are plenty of people on the lookout for precedents for confiscation.[7]

Lord Selborne does not dwell upon this point. But in a generation or two it may prove to be a very sharp point indeed. Those who rule posterity will no doubt be actuated by the same conviction as that of other rulers: that it is necessary for the public good that they should remain in office. If those who are then in power can stay in power only at the expense of landowners – including the landowners of London – they will do so. I am not defending the rights of the clergy or the rights of landowners; and I am not advocating expropriation. I merely suggest that an accepted diminution of the rights of a very small interest – that of the Church – may lead to a very large encroachment upon the rights of a very large interest – that of the owners of the land. It may even excite a few more people in our own time to wonder what private "right" there is in land at all, unless the "owner" is working that land for the public good.

At the same time, I should like to put in a word (as nobody else seems to do so, elsewhere) for the country clergy, those who are more or less impoverished by the consequences of the Tithe Bill. I know that some country clergy are overpaid and have too little to do; but this is not a matter to concern anti-clericals: it is rather the concern of those who know that many are underpaid, and that many meet with stolid indifference to all that they would like to do. I would not depreciate the devotion of priests in town "slums." But the slum priest has more malleable material than the country parson; he is also more often in contact, by bus or tram, with men who share his zeal, his intelligence, his education and his convictions; and he can be (especially if unmarried) on easier relations with his parishioners. The country parson is frequently very isolated; the father of a stubborn flock which regards him, in his spacious vicarage which he cannot keep in

repair, as a member of a gentry which has ceased to exist and which, in its present successors, is uninterested in him. The Church has been an essential, a central point in English rural life. It needs reorganization: but if it simply decays and disappears, then the decay of the English rural community will proceed apace; and England will become divided into three parts: industrial areas (elevated or depressed), suburbs, and beauty-spots. The Tithe Bill is a recognition of the unimportance of the country clergy.

Such reflexions as the foregoing arouse in me a strong protest against the *title* of a book by a Mr. H. R. G. Greaves (The Acorn Press: 5s. net) called *Reactionary England*.[8] Mr. H. J. Laski has called this book "suggestive and illuminating" – a combination of adjectives which is neither illuminating nor suggestive. Mr. C. R. Attlee has said that "every Socialist and lover of liberty should read this book": which makes one wonder whether Mr. Attlee has thought out what Socialists and lovers of liberty have in common, and whether lovers of liberty have any clearer notion of liberty than the Bishop of Durham has of justice. Mr. Tawney says that "few will lay down" some of Mr. Greaves' essays without feeling gratitude to him "for a clearer insight into the crisis in which we live." I am afraid that this clearer insight is what I failed to get. The author is apparently a member of the Labour Party, but in this book he is not concerned with an exposition of his own political beliefs, nor with analysis of the causes of the political tendencies of our time. The book is an industrious assemblage of facts in connexion with the decline of liberty; it is concerned with such matters as the power of the Police, the power of the Banks, the control of Parliament and the control of Foreign Policy. Assuming its statements to be correct (and I have no reason to doubt them) it is a useful book which should make people think. But I wish that the author could have found a better term for the tendencies towards absolutism than "reaction," which the O.E.D. defines as "a return, or desire to return, to a previous condition of affairs." That is certainly what the most important tendencies dealt with by Mr. Greaves are not. What practical politician cares twopence about returning to a previous state of affairs? "Revolutionary" would be a more suitable word, as we now know that revolution is not always towards communism: but we have come to associate "revolution" with a violent and sudden reversal of government, rather than with a gradual and hardly perceptible concentration of power. The only reactionaries today are those who object to the dictatorship of finance and the dictatorship of a bureaucracy under whatever

political name it is assembled; and those who would have some law and some ideal not purely of this world. But the movement, towards the Right so-called, about which Mr. Greaves is apprehensive, is far more profound than any mere machinations of consciously designing interests could make it. It is a symptom of the desolation of secularism, of that loss of vitality, through the lack of replenishment from spiritual sources, which we have witnessed elsewhere, and which becomes ready for the application of the artificial stimulants of nationalism and class.

T. S. E.

NOTES

1. H. R. L. (Hugh Richard Lawrie) "Dick" Sheppard (1880-1937), for twelve years Vicar of St. Martin-in-the-Fields and later Canon of St. Paul's Cathedral, was one of England's prominent pacifists at this time; his appeal in 1934 for men to sign a declaration to renounce war and refuse to support or sanction another led to the official formation of the Peace Pledge Union (PPU) in 1936. Herbert Hensley Henson (1863-1947), Bishop of Durham, writing under his ecclesiastical signature Herbert Dunelm, had published a letter in the *Times* of 27 Apr 1936 under the heading "Christianity and War / The Citizen's Duty / Service in a Just Cause" (15). The pacifist Aldous Huxley, a member of Canon Sheppard's PPU, had written the organization's first official tract, a pamphlet titled *What Are You Going to Do about It? The Case for Constructive Peace* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1936), quoting antiwar statements by several Fathers of the Church from the second to fourth centuries, including Tertullian (ca. 155-240 AD) and Lactantius (240-ca. 320 AD).

2. The Bishop of Durham begins his letter by stating that it is "high time that responsible authorities should think clearly and speak frankly on the subject of the Christian citizen's duty in the matter of military service." He first dismisses Canon Sheppard's support of resolution 25 of the Lambeth Conference of 1930 ("that war as a method of settling international disputes is incompatible with the teaching and example of our Lord Jesus Christ"), deeming it a "very formidable error." Henson then turns to the position of the Bishop of Southwell, William Mosley (1868-1948), who, discussing individual conscience and just war theory, "refers us to the Thirty-seventh Article of Religion, [to] which the Anglican clergy have subscribed." Of the "Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion" that comprise the doctrine of the Church, the Thirty-Seventh states in part, "It is lawful for Christian men, at the commandment of the Magistrate, to wear weapons, and serve in the wars."

3. The Bishop's full statement: "Would any maintain that a Christian citizen ought to refuse to serve in a war waged by his country in defence of international good faith and elementary justice? Does Christianity require the desertion of the Abyssinians? Does it entitle Mussolini to claim from Great Britain acquiescence in his immense crime? I do not doubt that the policy stated by the Prime Minister . . . and admirably maintained in circumstances of great difficulty by Mr. Eden at Geneva, can be justified on Christian principles and commands the approval of the general conscience." The Bishop had earlier protested the Italian war in Ethiopia, "This Infamous War," in the *Times* of 18 Nov 1935. Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin and Under-Secretary

of State for Foreign Affairs Anthony Eden (1897-1977) were in Geneva at the League of Nations to try to prevent war between Mussolini's Italy and Abyssinia (Ethiopia).

4. The Bishop writes: "In the Latin version of the Article there is a word, unfortunately omitted in the more familiar English version, which does appear to me to go to the root of the moral issue; and, since the Latin and the English versions are equally authentical, we are entitled to assume that they carry the same meaning. The Latin runs thus: 'Christianis licit, ex mandato magistratus, arma portare, et justa bella administrare.' Unfortunately the English version omits the crucial word 'justa,' making thus unlimited an obligation which, in the official Anglican Confession, is morally conditioned."

5. From the *Oresteia* trilogy (458 BC) of Aeschylus, TSE modeled his play *The Family Reunion* (1939) on the *Choephoroi*, the second play, in which Orestes kills his mother who had murdered his father. Though Orestes's avenging of his father's death is decreed by the gods, he is still hounded by the Eumenides (Furies) for retribution and expiation.

6. Tithe payments from farms to the established church to support the church and vicar had been ostensibly abolished in 1836, but many farms were still liable for tithe payments, with seizures still taking place. This led to the so-called Tithe War by the National Tithe Payers Association against the Tithe Bill of 1936, which provided for the Government to buy the tithes and pass on the costs in long-term taxation to those farms which had previously paid them. The anti-tithe demonstration in June 1936 was led by a Kent farmer and Methodist minister, Rev. R. N. Kedward, whose hostility was fueled by religious conviction and a concern for agriculture and country clergy. The tithes and seizures continued into the late 1940s before they were discontinued.

7. The letter appeared in the *Times* of 4 May 1936 under the heading "The Church and Tithe / Striking a Fair Balance" (15). William Palmer, 2nd Earl of Selborne (1859-1942), a Liberal Unionist politician, was former president of the Board of Agriculture.

8. H. R. G. (Harold Richard Goring) Greaves (1907-84), professor of political science at the London School of Economics (LSE). The dust jacket for *Reactionary England, and Other Essays* (1936) is untraced; the following testimonials are by Harold Joseph Laski, at this time a Marxist and professor of political science at the LSE; Clement Richard Attlee (1883-1967), leader of the Labour Party; R. H. (Richard Henry) Tawney (1880-1962), professor of economic history at the LSE.

The Year's Poetry

The Criterion: A Literary Review, 15 (July 1936) 691

The Editor Writes:

Mr. John Lehmann, one of the three editors of *The Year's Poetry* (The Bodley Head) has written to point out a misleading comment made by Miss Janet Adam Smith in the April number of *The Criterion*.

Unfortunately the letter has been mislaid, and at the moment of going to press we have been unable to get in touch with Mr. Lehmann.[1] His objection, however, was to the following criticism of *The Year's Poetry* made by Miss Adam Smith: "the inclusion of a chorus from *Murder in the Cathedral* would have made it more accurate."[2]

Mr. Lehmann points out, what is perfectly correct, that he invited me to allow a chorus from that play to be included, and that I declined on the ground that I was not yet ready to release any part of the play for anthology purposes.[3] Miss Adam Smith had no knowledge of these facts, and was therefore justified in her criticism; but I should have taken care to delete it before publication, and I therefore apologize to Mr. Lehmann, his fellow editors, and his publishers.

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. TSE wrote to the poet and editor John Lehmann (1907-87) on 7 Apr 1936: "I have your letter of the 4th instant, and wish to express my apologies for my oversight in allowing the sentence mentioned to appear in Miss Janet Smith's review. It is obvious that I should not have allowed such a sentence to be published. Miss Adam Smith herself of course was not in a position to know the facts. I propose to print your letter with an apology by myself in the next issue of *The Criterion*."

2. The writer and editor Janet Adam Smith (1905-99), wife of Michael Roberts, made this comment in an omnibus review, which included *The Year's Poetry 1935: A Representative Selection*, compiled by Gerald Gould, Denys Kilham Roberts, John Lehmann (London: John Lane, The Bodley Head, 1935), printed in the *Criterion* of Apr 1936 (524).

3. TSE wrote to Lehmann on 22 Aug 1935: "I have been thinking over your request for something to print in your anthology this year. I feel that it is too soon to cut up *Murder in the Cathedral* in that way." A chorus from *Murder in the Cathedral* appeared the following year in *The Year's Poetry 1936: A Representative Selection*, compiled by Denys Kilham Roberts, John Lehmann (London: John Lane, The Bodley Head, 1936).

Mr. Murry's Shakespeare[1]

A review of *Shakespeare*, by John Middleton Murry

London: Jonathan Cape, 1936. Pp. 448.

The Criterion: A Literary Review, 15 (July 1936) 708-10

Mr. Murry has written a book about Shakespeare which, for several reasons, is a very good book indeed. It was evidently a book that Mr. Murry wanted to write: one cannot read it without becoming convinced that he has worked on the subject for a long time, and has made himself perfectly familiar with the plays and poems of Shakespeare. It conveys an impression throughout of an easy command of the material; and Mr. Murry appears to have acquainted himself with Shakespeare literature so diligently and soberly that he neither parades his predecessors superfluously nor ignores them when their presence is desirable. Furthermore, his conjectures are always restrained by reason; and while scholars may perhaps be able to question some of his constructions, they cannot be allowed to deny that these constructions are illuminating, and valuable even if mistaken. Mr. Murry does not disguise conjecture as fact. And what one is more surprised to be able to make than any such commendations as the foregoing, is that Mr. Murry does not obtrude any views of his own about life and society, any more than we gladly consent to. The book is about Shakespeare and not about Mr. Murry.[2]

The author's first advantage is that he has an understanding which is uncommon, of the nature of poetry: more penetrating than that of most scholars and men of letters, and more comprehensive and catholic than that of most poets. For poets, when they meditate about poetry at all, are liable to generalize either from their own accomplishment or from their own designs; and their purposes and interests, if more exact, may also be narrower than those of their readers, so that their pronouncements should usually be considered in relation to their own poems. What the poet has to say about poetry, will often be most valuable when it consists of introspective observation of his own processes. The chief exception, or the nearest to an exception, consists of remarks here and there in the letters of Keats, a poet whom Mr. Murry has studied deeply, and here, certainly with great

profit.[3] For some of Keats's sayings come with a Delphic assurance: they need not have been fully understood by the man who uttered them; no process of reasoning enters into them; and they require to be interpreted by those who have the wit and the patience to do so. Mr. Murry gives me the impression, in this matter, of having been "receptive" before he became "active." And his understanding of the way in which a poet's mind may work is here put, not to the invention of a metaphysic, but to practical purpose in dealing with Shakespeare's early work and questions of attribution.

I think that the author is right, to begin with (though I cannot prove it) when he says that "The probability is rather that the formative years of a poet of Shakespeare's peculiar kind would have been not much more but much less strongly marked by idiosyncrasy than those of poets of a different kind" [29]. I do not think that Shakespeare quite fits into either the class of people who mature quickly or the class of those who mature late. Shakespeare arrived in a very short number of years at a maturity which seems *complete*: no one has ever gone further in a short time. We cannot explain that away by saying that he started ripe: the early works are there to disprove it. But unlike most of us, he wasted no time; and everything he wrote he turned to account for his further development. Like Mr. Murry, I regard his early skill in imitation and his rapid development – rapid considering the distance to which he went – as a sign of the greatest creative genius; and I am glad to find Mr. Murry positive in restoring to him a great deal which some scholars have attributed elsewhere.

It is in the first half of the book that I find Mr. Murry's most original and convincing theories. His discussion of the Sonnets is very valuable;[4] and his understanding of the difference between Shakespeare's attitude to the stage and to the audience, and that of his great contemporary dramatists, I find very satisfactory.[5] (I question one assertion of a more general kind: on page 135 Mr. Murry affirms that "Drama is the highest and fullest form of poetry." I should say that in the highest and fullest forms of poetry there is a dramatic element; but I doubt whether the highest and fullest poetry has to take the form of drama. For any form of poetry restricts one's liberty; and drama is a very peculiar form: there is a great deal that is high and full poetry that will not go into that form. Drama was, I think, less of a restriction to Shakespeare than it has ever been to any other dramatic poet; but I do not see how we can assert that it is a higher and fuller *form* than that used by Homer or that used by Dante.)

What strikes me with particular force and novelty in the first part of the book is the author's discovery – the term is merited – of what he calls "the Shakespeare man" and of the peculiar significance of the Bastard Falconbridge in *King John*.[6]

Whether Mr. Murry has concentrated his attention on the earlier plays, or whether he became a little tired, or whether he merely wished to keep his book within a certain compass, I do not know; but I should have been glad if the later plays could have received such attention as to have doubled the size of the volume (every page of which is *interesting*). Not that he has not much to say that is worth saying about every play that he discusses. But there is either haste or regrettable compression: one would have liked an account of *Timon* and *Troilus*, which are left to be interpreted through the author's original view of *King Lear*.[7] About *Hamlet*, I remain of my opinion of many years ago, that the theory of "intractable material" associated with the names of Robertson and Stoll is still necessary, though I have come to doubt some of my own additions to that theory.[8] And I should like to protest, in passing, against Mr. Murry's "modern mind," his "us of the twentieth century."[9] It seems to me more than a slight exhibition of narrowness and perhaps even arrogance for him to assert that Hamlet's "question: 'For in that sleep of death what dreams may come?' is to us little more than an engaging and delightful speculation – a fascinating theme for casual meditation" [246]. The fact that Mr. Murry has the majority with him does not make such a statement less perverse: there are still a number of people who would be as amazed as Dr. Johnson would have been by these words, and even a few as terrified, not by death, but by what may come after. But I do not understand Mr. Murry half so well as Mr. Murry understands Shakespeare.

There is of course much more in any of the mature plays of Shakespeare than can be seen from any one critic's point of view; and Mr. Murry is to be admired for having seen so much. It is indeed part of the use of interpretations of the various plays to stimulate their reader to develop his own; and it would be otiose to point out aspects of one play or another which do not appear in Mr. Murry's account. There is some important generalization about "sensation" in the chapter "Imagery and Imagination";[10] and, as I have already said, the chapter on *King Lear* is of great interest. On the last group of plays (*Pericles*, *Cymbeline*, *The Winter's Tale* and *The Tempest*) I feel Mr. Murry's treatment to be too brief; on these plays I have received more help from the writings of Mr. Wilson Knight.[11]

It is to be hoped that Mr. Murry will be persuaded to remove from the next edition the tasteless conversation between Shakespeare and himself which forms the "Epilogue."

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. Untitled in the *Criterion*. "Title from wrapper" (Gallup 232).

2. In his "Commentary" (Apr 1935), TSE says of Murry: "Mr. Murry before he became a Marxian was already the only Christian; and at times he has appeared to be the only Marxian. The social whole sometimes appears to dissolve into Mr. Murry. It is not in the least surprising, of course, to find Mr. Murry identifying Christianity with Marxism; this is the sort of dissolving trick which we are accustomed to see this wizard perform" (5.239).

3. Murry's 1925 Clark Lectures *Keats and Shakespeare* (1925) dealt with the Romantic poet, as did his *Studies in Keats* (1930), and his edition of the two-volume *The Poems and Verses of John Keats* (1930).

4. See chapter IV, "The Sonnet Story" (91-117).

5. Murry discusses Shakespeare's relationship with his audience in chapter V, "The Blunt Monster" (118-40).

6. See chapter X, "The Shakespeare Man" (212-34). In chapter V, "The Blunt Monster," Murry argues that "The Bastard dominates *King John*; he represents England against the vagaries and the viciousness of its titular king" (123). Murry discusses this character's importance at length in chapter VII, "Shakespeare and England" (155-69). In "The Development of Shakespeare's Verse" (1937), TSE wrote: "For the importance of the character of the Bastard, I would refer to the admirable expositions by Mr. Middleton Murry in his book" (5.543).

7. In chapter XVI, "The Paradox of *King Lear*," Murry writes: "I should put *King Lear* and *Timon* and *Troilus* together as the evidence of a period of uncontrollable despair, lit by gleams of illumination" (338).

8. In "Hamlet" (1919), where TSE discusses J. M. Robertson's *The Problem of "Hamlet"* (1919) and Elmer Edgar Stoll's *Hamlet: An Historical and Comparative Study* (1919), he points out: "The upshot of Mr. Robertson's examination is, we believe, irrefragable: that Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, so far as it is Shakespeare's, is a play dealing with the effect of a mother's guilt upon her son, and that Shakespeare was unable to impose this motive successfully upon the 'intractable' material of the old play" (2.123).

9. After quoting from *Measure for Measure* III.i.115-32, Murry comments: "Again we are struck with the feeling how alien is the thought of these impressive verses to a modern mind" (253). He argued earlier in the chapter that the potency of "the motive of hesitation" in *Hamlet* "is tremendous, once it is recognized. Yet it is hard for us of the twentieth century really to recognize it. Our sensitivity is dulled in this regard" (245).

10. Murry writes: "There is an intimate relation between the image-'sensation' and the character-'sensation.' Cleopatra is, for Shakespeare, a 'sensation' as immediate, as incontrovertible, as independent, as natural, as the 'sensation' of the hounds. Like that 'sensation,' it is spiritual and physical, intellectual and emotional all at once: it is a mode of the *total* undivided being of Shakespeare" (293).

11. These plays are discussed in chapter XVIII, "Shakespeare's Dream" (380-412). In his introduction to G. Wilson Knight's *The Wheel of Fire* (1930), TSE wrote: "It happened, fortunately for myself, that when I read some of his papers I was mulling over some of the later plays, particularly *Pericles*, *Cymbeline*, and the *Winter's Tale*; and reading the later plays for the first time in my life as a separate group, I was impressed by what seemed to me important and very serious recurrences of mood and theme" (4.149). In 1928, TSE read the manuscript of Knight's essay "Thaisa," later reworked as *Myth and Miracle*. Here Knight outlined his thesis that Shakespeare's final plays were the "inevitable development of the questioning, the pain, the profundity and grandeur of the plays they succeed" (London: E. J. Burrow & Co, 1929, 1).

Dr. Charles Harris

To the Editor of *The Times*

The Times (13 Aug 1936) 12

Mr. T. S. Eliot writes: – Having been away for a week in the country and inattentive to newspapers, I have only just learned of the death of Dr. Charles Harris.[1] Possibly you would care to print the following paragraph by one who was associated with Dr. Harris for several years past in the schemes that he had most at heart:

The death of Charles Harris removes the most powerful force in the publication of theological literature in the Church of England. I say "publication," because in spite of his considerable learning, his wide interests, and his fertility of ideas, Harris always put his own writing second to his great enthusiasm, which was the work of the Book Committee of the Church Union. Of his work in Convocation, to which he gave equal attention so long as health permitted, I cannot speak with such intimate knowledge.[2] But I have always thought that if he had been a layman, and if he had chosen such a profession, he might have become the most successful publisher in London: he would either have made or lost a fortune. He was, however, indifferent to money and celebrity. His aims were on a grand scale, and sometimes gave pause to the more cautious; some of his most ambitious remain unrealized. But one believed that if anyone could realize them, it was he. Enthusiasm sometimes made him a little tactless, but few men have had a greater power of communicating their enthusiasm. During his last years he lived in continuous discomfort between periods of acute physical suffering, but at all times, even just before or after a serious operation, his cheerfulness, serenity, and zeal were undiminished. He was sometimes misjudged by those who knew him only superficially; but no one could know him at all well without regarding him with great affection and admiration.

NOTES

1. Rev. Charles Harris, D. D., Prebendary of Hereford Cathedral and author of several theological works including *Pro Fide: A Defence of Natural and Revealed Religion* (1905) and *Creeds or No Creeds? A Critical Examination of the Basis of Modernism* (1922), died on 30 July. He was chairman of the Book Committee of the Church Literature Association, whose business

was to oversee the publication of books on suitable ecclesiastical and theological subjects. TSE was secretary of the committee.

2. Harris's obituary in the *Times* of 6 Aug stated that "he was a prominent member of Convocation, where he was a keen defender of the spiritual rights of the Church. He had latterly been engaged in extended researches into the history of Convocation, and had hoped to publish a treatise on the subject" (12). TSE wrote to Harris on 23 Oct 1935: "while I am sure you will be very much missed in Convocation, you are, I feel, still more indispensable for the Literature Committee" (tseliot.com/explore/letters).

A Commentary

The Criterion: A Literary Review, 16 (Oct 1936) 63-69

One would prefer to deal with questions that are soluble, and discuss subjects on which understanding is possible. But one is impelled, by the receipt of manifestoes to be signed by "artists and writers," as well as by scientists and other intellectual workers, to pursue reflexion on the subject of peace and war. I have at the moment some matter from the "International Peace Campaign," also a round robin or snowball letter of a semi-anonymous nature, and a pamphlet by Lord Allen of Hurtwood, entitled *Peace in Our Time*.[1] There is also, of course, Canon Sheppard's movement, which does not appear to employ the method of circularization.[2] Artists and writers are exhorted to efforts of various kinds in the cause of peace. So far, I have not been invited to sign any manifesto in favour of war; but I do not doubt that if a war broke out in which there appeared to be any reason for Britain's participation, manifestoes to this effect would at once be offered for signature.

I confess that I am only confused by the variety of reasons submitted to me for supporting peace, besides those of which I am aware without being told, and by the variety of ways in which peace is to be secured. Lord Allen, who declares himself a "lifelong pacifist" [8] (and from his record no one can doubt the sincerity of his conviction), is an ardent supporter of the League Militant. "Either," he says, "the Government does not mean that it accepts force as an integral part of the League (in which case it ought to return to armed alliances and prepare for anarchic war), or it does mean that force should be employed through the League (in which case it should stop talking of world-wars and take steps to make collective force workmanlike)" [9]. The problem about which Lord Allen leaves me in the dark is this: while I concede that on the highest plane it is equally to the advantage of all peoples to preserve peace, there appears to be a lower plane on which the preservation of peace is more to the interest of some nations than others. The preservation of peace is of interest to at least three or four great powers which have everything to lose, and to the interest of a number of small nations which have nothing to gain, by war. (With respect to the countries which might have at a given moment, or might think that they

would have, something to gain by war, the question of *who* in those countries would be actually the better off for a successful war, is not immediately relevant.) But we have to be very careful to separate our ideal motives for maintaining peace from our worldly motives. The value of Lord Allen's peace programme seems to depend upon whether a renovated League (which, Lord Allen would probably agree, would require the adherence of Germany, and if possible of Japan and the United States also) is capable of being "a means of mutual service for the welfare of its members" [15]. While one can hardly be expected to brighten at the suggestion of setting up more "fact-finding commissions," one is willing to hear what sort of "revisions in the *status quo*, both territorial and economic" [15], Lord Allen has to suggest – revisions which should satisfy everybody. I can see that economic revision is desirable – perhaps revision of the whole system so drastic as to be a revision of human emotions: one would like to know how far Lord Allen thinks this revision should go.

Lord Allen's pacificism does not rely exclusively upon the belief that by nothing more than some as yet undiscovered reshuffle everybody can be satisfied and pacified. There is a mystical element in it too. He says: "I do not believe that an unarmed nation would be a universal victim, for it would no longer be feared as a menace to its neighbours" [21]. This is a belief which I have never yet seen put in a wholly persuasive form. It seems possible that if an individual was known to be unarmed and helpless, a gang of footpads might be less likely to use violence against him, because they could possess themselves of his money without putting themselves to that exertion. Does Lord Allen mean by "unarmed," furthermore, merely being without armies, fleets and instruments of war? There remain economic arms and commercial battles. It is only by making the assumption that there is enough desirable land in the world, and enough materials of all kinds, to maintain everybody contentedly on the highest level of civilization of which each people is capable that we can believe that permanent peace is even a *possibility*. I believe that we *must* make that assumption: but that we must look, to realize the possibility, to a further reorganization of society than Lord Allen appears to contemplate.

The first difficulty that I experience with the leaflet that I have received from the "International Peace Campaign" is that it makes a special appeal to members of my own profession: it is headed *War and Writers*. While I am not insensible to argument in favour of anything which will help me to

ply my own trade to the best of my ability, the assertion that "Modern war and preparations for war are hostile to the arts, and most of all to writing" (I do not understand why most of all to writing), seems to me almost trifling when the issue is so serious. It is true that the arts, the art of writing among them, have something to do with the maintenance and development of "civilization"; but I am not sure that even the "maintenance of civilization" is quite an adequate battle-cry in favour of peace.[3] Civilization has almost too many friends. Apart from a minor difference between those who want a new civilization, and those who champion the civilization that we already have, there is almost complete unanimity. I am sure that all our great leaders – not only Stalin and Hitler and Mussolini and Kemal Ataturk, but Colonel Beck and even General Franco, would be willing to stake everything in the cause of civilization: even Mr. Baldwin and M. Blum and Mr. Roosevelt would be mildly in its favour.[4] There are only a few weak inaudible voices, in the mountains of Papua and other remote places, still raised for the cause of savagery or barbarism – and these we may ignore. In any case I do not like to be appealed to as an "intellectual," if it be implied that intellectuals, as a class, have any *special interest* in the maintenance of peace. It is for the whole human race, not for any particular elements, that I should consider peace worth maintaining. And when we say "civilization," speaking of it as something which we possess and not as something towards which we merely aim, do we all mean the same thing? There is a good deal in our own world beside civilization: which of the elements in this world do we indicate by that term? The term "civilization" can cover a great variety of values.

There is a certain difference, not merely hair-splitting, between affirming that peace is a good thing and affirming that war is an evil thing. Whether peace is good is as may be, though war, as Pope Nicholas I said, "is always satanic in its origin."[5] The supporters of peace seem sometimes to emphasize the obvious unpleasantness of war, rather than its fundamental evil. Thus the leaflet of the International Peace Campaign, which I have already quoted, dwells upon the unpleasantness of modern warfare for civilians. "Danger they will face, but danger against which they can take no stimulating action. They will merely be poisoned, burned, blown to pieces, buried under heaps of masonry, or starved." It goes on to list the terrors of militarism civilians will be exposed to: ". . . militaristic propaganda, to censorship, to repression. Everything will be done to train them to accept

without criticism all ideas presented to them with official sanction, and to reject with unreasoning dislike all ideas that are officially unacceptable and alien to their stereotyped mental habits." These are undoubtedly evils of war, though one might add that one has seen the training "to accept without criticism all ideas presented with official sanction" carried on successfully in time of peace. But none of these things is the essential evil of war; they are even evils which, if we conscientiously believed that a particular war was justified, we should put up with as patiently as we could. They do not come near the moral evil to which everyone is exposed, and from which everyone more or less must suffer, in time of war.

But besides the insufficiency of the reasons sometimes adduced against war, there is the question of what we are asked to do. It is certainly our obligation to do everything we can to make peace better worth preserving for *all* members of society – except that small element which likes fighting but which in a well-ordered community would be negligible. But this is usually treated as a separate problem. The other manifesto, which I have not yet quoted, runs as follows:

> We, the undersigned, women and men accustomed to the expression of thought in public and having no obligations towards any political organization, hereby pledge ourselves to employ to the best of our ability and with all possible diligence every legitimate means at our disposal to deprive of power every political leader, professional politician or publicist of whatever category who, whether by word or action, shall do anything to promote or accentuate international misunderstandings and unrests or who shall in any way conduce to a state of warfare between any nations anywhere or at any time.[6]

In an explanatory note attached to the manifesto it is very sensibly added that the signatories should "limit our active measures or propaganda to our own nationals."

The undertaking is reasonable enough; if I understand it correctly, it pledges one to do no more than is the duty of every person without making any pledge. In its general acceptability lies its weakness. It is not so easy to apply, when every politician and every party assure us that they are the real friends of peace, and that their method is the true way to keep it. It is not easy for the ordinary person to know – it is not always easy for the protagonists to know – what step in diplomacy will conduce to war or to peace.

If it was obvious that a particular statesman was acting in such a way as to conduce to a state of warfare, the whole nation, at this stage of affairs, would probably rise against him. There was a moment when a large number of the people who can influence public opinion rose in exclamation against Sir Samuel Hoare; yet it is not certain that it was not they – whether rightly or wrongly is not here the point – rather than the unlucky Foreign Secretary, who were acting in such a way as to conduce to a state of warfare.[7]

There seems to be only one group of pacifists occupying an impregnable position, and that is the smallest. Those who believe that the word of God revealed to man is uncompromisingly and without exception opposed to the taking of human life may be wrong, but they cannot be confuted. They hold a respectable position, in that they oppose, not the incidental evils of war, but war in itself as an evil; they do not maintain that it is dreadful to be killed, but that it is a deadly sin to kill. But apart from this small number, the real issue of our time is not between those who believe in recourse to war and those who do not: the frontiers are too vague. The real issue is between the secularists – whatever political or moral philosophy they support – and the anti-secularists: between those who believe only in values realizable in time and on earth, and those who believe also in values realized only out of time. Here again the frontiers are vague, but for a different reason: only because of vague thinking and the human tendency to think that we believe in one philosophy, while we are really living according to another.

Algar Thorold died while the last number of *The Criterion* was in press.[8] He had been a frequent contributor since very early in our history: his knowledge especially of modern French philosophy and theology was invaluable.[9] Having written very few books – his *Masters in Disillusion* has been out of print for many years – he was not known to a very wide public, and another generation will not be aware that *The Dublin Review*, under his editorship, was one of the most distinguished periodicals of its time. Being half-French by birth, and at the same time thoroughly English, with the culture of the past and the curiosity of the present, he held a position as a man of letters such that we could say of him, that he was the sort of man whom we could ill afford to lose. And those who knew him as a friend, and remember the combination of dignity and informality, geniality and wisdom, will murmur the words of the poet:

They will come no more,
The old men with beautiful manners.[10]

Concerning Gilbert Keith Chesterton the present writer has nothing to add to a few paragraphs contributed to *The Tablet* a week or two after Chesterton's death.[11] But as Chesterton also had contributed to *The Criterion*, his death also should be mentioned in these pages. It is not for his attainments in pure letters that he should be celebrated here: though it may be said that if he did nothing to develop the sensibility of the language, he did nothing to obstruct it. Nor are his religious convictions precisely our affair. What matters here is his lonely moral battle against his age, his courage, and his bold combination of genuine conservatism, genuine liberalism, and genuine radicalism.

T. S. E.

NOTES

1. Later in the essay, TSE refers to the International Peace Campaign's leaflet, "War and Writers," the title of its circular form (dated 25 July 1936). A cover letter (dated 12 Aug 1936, unpublished) signed by Dame Adelaide Livingstone was sent to prospective signatories. The manifesto was later published in the *Times* under the heading: "Art in Modern War: Spreading the Spirit of Peace" (28 Aug 1936, 8). The mailing address of the International Peace Campaign is given, preceded by the signatures of Aldous Huxley, C. Day Lewis, Rose Macaulay, V. S. Pritchett, Siegfried Sassoon, Olaf Stapledon, Sylvia Townsend Warner, Rebecca West, and Leonard Woolf. The manifesto also appeared, under the heading "International Peace Campaign," in *Time and Tide* (5 Sept 1936, 1219).

Clifford Allen, 1st Baron Allen of Hurtwood, *Peace in our Time: An Appeal to the International Peace Conference of June 16, 1936*. London: Chatto & Windus, 1936.

2. Canon Dick Sheppard was founder of the Peace Pledge Union, whose weekly newspaper, *Peace News*, began circulation in June 1936. TSE was critical of Sheppard's movement in his previous "Commentary" (5.380).

3. The phrase "maintenance of civilization" appears nowhere in the draft or published versions of the letter; the penultimate paragraph begins: "The time has come for all those who care for the well-being of our civilization to take resolute action for peace" (8).

4. Mustafa Kemal (1881-1938) was the founder of the Republic of Turkey and its first president (1923-38). He was given the honorific "Atatürk" ("Father of the Turks") in 1934. On 9 Oct 1947, TSE wrote to Captain Blackburn: "I agree that there can never be freedom from fear for the subjects of the dictatorship; but one can hardly say that the dictatorships of Metaxas or Ataturk, or earlier, of Abdul Hamid or the Empress Dowager of China, gave cause to western Europeans to tremble in their beds."

Józef Beck (1894-1944) served as a military officer, and then as minister of foreign affairs for the Second Republic of Poland from 1932 until 1939.

Stanley Baldwin, Conservative politician, was then serving his third and final term as prime minister of Great Britain (1935-37).

Léon Blum (1872-1950), a member of the Socialist Party, was prime minister of France in the Popular Front coalition from 1936 to 1937.

Franklin D. Roosevelt, a Democrat, was president of the United States from 1933 to 1945.

5. "War is always satanic in its origin and you must always abstain from it. But if it be impossible to avoid it, that is in defence of oneself, or one's country and of the laws of one's fathers, it is without doubt lawful to make ready to meet it, even during Lent." Nicholas I, *Responsa ad Bulgaros*, in John Eppstein, *The Catholic Tradition of the Law of Nations* (London: Burns, Oates and Washbourne, 1935), 196. Eppstein's English version is partly a translation and partly a condensation of a more expansive passage, written by Nicholas I in 866, addressing questions of the Bulgars. (Nicolaus I, *Responsa Nicolai ad consulta Bulgarorum* [*Responsa ad Bulgaros*], Letter 97, ch. 46, *Patrologia Latina*, vol 119.)

6. Source untraced.

7. Samuel John Gurney Hoare, 1st Viscount Templewood (1880-1959), British Conservative politician. As British Foreign Secretary, in Dec 1935 Hoare drafted a secret plan with the French Prime Minister Pierre Laval that proposed offering Mussolini large sections of a partitioned Abyssinia in return for an end to the Italo-Abyssinian war. Once news of the plan leaked, the Hoare-Laval Pact was strongly rejected in both Great Britain and France, and was generally interpreted as a betrayal of their countries' commitments to the League of Nations. Hoare resigned as a result, the war continued, and several months later Italy was in control of the entire nation of Abyssinia.

8. Thorold died on 30 May 1936.

9. Thorold began to contribute to the *Criterion* in the latter half of the journal's run, rather than "very early in our history" as TSE states. Though Thorold's first signed contribution was Apr 1931, TSE had been in conversation with him on 23 May 1930 about taking on the French periodical review; the unsigned review that appeared in Apr 1931 may have been by Thorold. TSE reviewed Thorold's translation of Maritain's *Prayer and Intelligence* (3.446) in June 1928, after which they began a correspondence. Thorold was editor of *The Dublin Review* from 1926 to 1934, and his *Six Masters in Disillusion* appeared in 1909 (London: Constable).

On 1 Dec 1954, TSE wrote to Rev. Michael Hanbury: "I cannot say I knew Algar Thorold intimately, but I lunched with him from time to time over a certain period of years. My relations with him were, I think, chiefly arising out of my Editorship of *The Criterion*. He was a valued contributor, and I liked him very much indeed as a man. . . . I certainly remember the man himself not only with regard and respect, but affection."

10. The opening lines of Ezra Pound's "I Vecchii," from *Moeurs Contemporaines* (1918), included in TSE's edition of Pound's *Selected Poems* (London: Faber & Gwyer, 1928), 152.

11. Chesterton died on 14 June 1936. Much of the 20 June issue of *The Tablet* was "devoted to [Chesterton's] memory and to an appraisal of his influence" (1), including TSE's own short contribution (5.369).

The Need for Poetic Drama[1]

The Listener, 16 (25 Nov 1936) 994-95

I am very glad to have the opportunity of talking to you about verse drama, because it is a subject that very few people ever stop to think about; and I suspect that most people regard plays in verse as a necessary evil, like examinations. People think of them as something of a strain on the mind even when not actually boring, and they had rather be excused from going to see them. I believe, on the other hand, that poetry is the natural and complete medium for drama; that the prose play is a kind of abstraction capable of giving you only a part of what the theatre can give; and that the verse play is capable of something much more intense and exciting.

One symptom of the permanent need for poetic drama is that it has never quite died out. Ever since the time of Shakespeare people have been trying, off and on, to write plays in verse which could be acted. Some of these have had even a temporary success on the stage, simply because when people want a thing very much they will for a time take what they can get. But it usually turned out that what people were trying to do was to imitate Shakespeare, and Shakespeare had done it so very much better that we prefer the original. But there is a satisfaction to be got from original contemporary work which cannot be had from a performance of any old dramatist, even as great as Shakespeare, and so we go on trying to do something for ourselves. It is to Mr. William Butler Yeats, more than to anyone else, that we owe the revival of poetic drama in our time. I am thinking of the work of Mr. Yeats as a whole: his own plays; his encouragement of other writers, such as J. M. Synge; and his work for the Abbey Theatre in Dublin, which kept poetic drama alive when it was almost extinct elsewhere. But we owe a debt also to men whose relation to contemporary literature is not so direct; to Shakespeare scholars, such as the late William Poel whose studies and whose practical work with the Elizabethan stage have done so much to change our conceptions of how Shakespeare ought to be produced.[2] We have begun to see that the actor is more important than the scenery, that verse should be spoken as verse and not as prose, and that the actor should be in an intimacy of relation to the audience which had for a long time been the secret of the music-hall comedian.

Now it is interesting that this work on Shakespeare production, which has its lesson for the production of all plays in verse, largely antedated the development of the film; but its value has been confirmed as the film has been perfected to such a point that we can begin to see what it can do better than the stage, and what it cannot do as well.

There are, of course, all sorts of beautiful effects that the film can get and that are impossible to the stage: such as the negroes paddling their war canoes in *Sanders of the River*.[3] But I am concerned with something more fundamental. The cinema gives an illusion not of the stage but of life itself. When we see a great music-hall comedian on the stage, such as George Robey or Ernie Lotinga, we feel that he is conscious of his audience, that a great deal of the effect depends upon a sympathy set up between actor and audience, and we like to feel that some of his gags are spontaneous and were not thought of the night before.[4] But when we see Laurel and Hardy, it is not Laurel and Hardy acting for *us*, it is Laurel and Hardy in another mess.[5] The film is the vehicle of illusion, and it makes all the illusion of the stage seem crude. Then, again, while it is likely that voice reproduction will be further improved by science, I think that the spoken word will always be secondary in the film: in the best films today the voice is used sparingly, and interspersed with significant noises and even music. And, finally, there is no illusion of scenery on the stage that the worst-equipped film studio cannot improve upon.

So you see that it is reasonable that the stage should not attempt to compete with the film in illusion of scenery, and surprising realism of event. It should turn to the voice, to movement which is meant to be seen from several angles, and to the things which can be done by the actor himself and which cannot be done by his pictures. And all this points to the verse play.

Now you will not get the most out of poetic drama of *any* period if you think of it merely as a play in verse. You should not think of verse as something *added* to a play, which gives it the rank of "literature." I dare say that some verse plays have been written under this misunderstanding, and that is one reason why some verse plays are bad. A true verse play is not a play translated into verse, it is conceived and carried out in terms of verse. To work out a play in verse is to be working like a musician as well as like a prose dramatist: it is to see the thing as a whole musical pattern. And this is an entirely different thing from a play set to music. It is not like opera, but some musical form like the sonata or fugue. The verse dramatist must operate on you on two levels at once, dramatically, with the characters and plot.

The requirements for a good plot are just as severe as for a prose play:[6] in the one case as the other the essential thing is never to lose the audience's attention but to keep it always excited about what is going to happen next. It is fatal for a poet trying to write a play, to hope to make up for defects in the movement of the play by bursts of poetry which do not help the action. But underneath the action, which should be perfectly intelligible, there should be a musical pattern which intensifies our excitement by reinforcing it with feeling from a deeper and less articulate level. Everybody knows that there are things that can be said in music that cannot be said in speech. And there are things that can be said in poetic drama that cannot be said in either music or ordinary speech.

I have not the time to make this either quite clear or quite convincing, so I must leave it as something for you to think about yourselves. There is one very important question which I must pass on to deal with if the aims of contemporary verse drama are to seem justified. You may say: "I agree, poetic drama is the highest kind; but even so, why not stick to the versification and the dramatic form of Shakespeare, since that has justified itself and is the most natural for anyone writing in English?"

The simplest answer would be to say that we can't, but, even so, the question *why* we can't has to be answered. We may approach this from two sides: that of versification, the question why blank verse of the Shakespearean pattern is unsuitable; and that of dramatic form, the question why the Shakespearean five-act play is unsuitable. From whichever side we approach it, there is one underlying truth: that the creation of any form cannot be the work of one man or of one generation of men working together, but has to evolve by the small contributions of a number of people in succession, each contributing a little. Shakespeare himself did not invent suddenly. In his earliest works he was busy with adapting other people's plays, and was quite content to imitate pretty closely the styles and the forms of other writers, so that it is still unsettled just what lines he wrote and did not write in some of his early plays. There is another general truth: that a form which has been perfected by one age cannot be copied exactly by writers of another age. It belongs to its own period. If we wrote in the dramatic form and in the versification of Shakespeare we should only succeed in making rather poor imitations of Shakespeare: we should not be contributing anything to the life of our own time.

The problem for us, therefore, is to get away from Shakespeare. That is not so easy. I have found, in trying to write dramatic verse, that however

different a metre from blank verse I was working with, whenever my attention has relaxed, or I have gone sleepy and stupid, I will wake up to find that I have been writing bad Shakespearean blank verse: and I have had to scrap the lot and start all over again. Hence we have to make use of suggestions from more remote drama, too remote for there to be any danger of imitation, such as *Everyman*, and the late mediaeval morality and mystery plays, and the great Greek dramatists.[7]

Furthermore, in the desire to emphasise those essentials of drama which have tended to be forgotten – the permanent struggles and conflicts of human beings – we wish to remind the audience that what they are seeing is a play, and not a photograph. The theatre, in the effort to get greater and greater realism – that is, greater illusion – and thereby attempting to do what the cinema can do better, has tended to depart so far from poetry as to depart from prose too; and to give us people on the stage who are so extremely lifelike that they do not even talk prose, but merely make human noises. So we want to take the opposite direction, and not let the audience forget that what they are hearing is verse. Blank verse can too easily be made to sound as if it were bad prose, and the more regular the verse the more easily it can be maltreated in this way. So we introduce rhyme, even doggerel, as a constant reminder that it *is* verse and not a compromise with prose.

And there is a great difference between making your characters *talk in verse*, and merely making them *recite poetry*. Most poetry is made to be read, though good poetry ought to be read aloud: but it can afford to demand that you shall read it several times. It can afford to wait for its effect.

Dramatic poetry has to do two things: it has to make an immediate effect on an audience who cannot be assumed to have read it before they came to the theatre: if it cannot do this, it is not dramatic. And it has to be good enough to bear reading afterwards, and to give permanent pleasure to the reader in his armchair as well as to the auditor in the theatre; if it cannot do this, it is not poetry. It must be simple and clear on the surface, and be simply relevant to the action which is going forward; but it should also have depths which can only be penetrated by the reader who studies it again and again.

What I have just said about the necessity for poetic drama at the present time to emphasise, not to minimise, the fact that it is written in verse, should take us a step towards understanding the revival of the chorus. The use of the chorus in the full sense has hitherto been foreign to English drama, except of course in a few plays, such as Swinburne's *Atalanta in*

Calydon, which imitate the Greeks,[8] though the essential function of the chorus, its place as a more or less detached observer or a commenter upon the action of the play, is performed by individual characters in some of Shakespeare's plays – for example Feste the Clown in *Twelfth Night*, to whom it is given to end the play by singing a song to the audience.[9] The chorus has an intermediate position between the characters of the play and their plot and the audience. It may be nearer to the audience, and so simply a commentator; or it may be nearer to the action of the play, and so taking part in it. For instance, in one of W. H. Auden's plays, *The Dog Beneath the Skin*, the chorus is almost an interlude addressing the audience. In his more recent play, *Ascent of F.6*, the chorus are two characters who are watching the play and are interested in it.[10]

In my own *Murder in the Cathedral* the chorus is still more concerned with the action of the play. But the function of the chorus depends on the intention and design of that particular play. In writing the words for a chorus one finds that the larger it is the simpler their words have to be.

But I have not time to say more about the special problem of the chorus. I only want to say that in making use of it we do not aim to *copy* Greek drama. There is a good deal about the Greek theatre that we do not know, and never shall know. But we know that some of its conventions cannot be ours. The characters frequently talk too long; the chorus has too much to say and holds up the action; usually not enough happens; and the Greek notion of climax is not ours. But the chorus has always fundamentally the same uses. It mediates between the action and the audience; it intensifies the action by projecting its emotional consequences, so that we as the audience see it doubly, by seeing its effect on other people. And it has the great advantage of being conveyed more fully in verse than in prose, and of supporting something of which I spoke at the beginning, the *musical pattern*, as well as the dramatic pattern, of the play.

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. A school's broadcast to sixth forms aired at 3:35 p.m. on 20 Nov on the BBC National Service as "Talk on Poetic Drama." For previous broadcasts published by TSE in the *Listener*, the editors have used his broadcast scripts as copytexts for restoring deleted passages and correcting errors in the *Listener* texts; however, TSE's script for this talk is missing from those in the BBC Written Archives, Caversham, and the Eliot Estate. Thus, the present text is as printed in the *Listener*, except that the unauthorized subject subtitles, inserted by its editors in bold as reading breaks between some paragraphs, have been deleted, as in previous texts.

TSE received a letter of 10 Nov from F. N. Lloyd Williams of the BBC regarding the audience: "I am afraid you cannot assume when you draft your talk that more than 10% of your audience will be familiar with any contemporary verse dramas. They will be boys and girls aged 16-18, and a mixed lot: some of them have only this summer passed their School Certificate month."

2. William Poel (1852-1934), British actor, manager, and dramatist, founder of the Elizabethan Stage Society, author of *Shakespeare in the Theatre* (1913) and *What Is Wrong with the Stage: Some Notes on the English Theatre from the Earliest Times to the Present Day* (1920). He spent much of his career researching and lecturing on Elizabethan performance and put his studies to work on stage.

3. *Sanders of the River* (1935), a British film directed by Zoltán Korda starring Leslie Banks and Paul Robeson, was based on the stories of Edgar Wallace and set in 1930s Nigeria.

4. TSE wrote to William J. Griffin about George Robey on 30 June 1939: "In certain passages his training as a musical comedian gave him an understanding of how to convey the speeches directly to the audience, which few actors not trained on the musical hall stage possess"; and to Virginia Woolf on 21 June 1927 that Lotinga is "the greatest living British histrionic Artist, in the purest tradition of British Obscenity" (*L3* 567).

5. The comedy duo of Englishman Stan Laurel (1890-1965) and American Oliver Hardy (1892-1957) provided one of the most popular comedy acts of the early Hollywood era of American cinema. They were well known during the late 1920s to the mid-1940s for their slapstick routines, with Laurel playing the naïve and awkward friend of the imperious Hardy. Hardy's catchphrase, "Another nice mess," is a variation on the title of one of their comedies, *Another Fine Mess* (1930).

6. On 5 Dec 1949 the BBC's European Liaison Officer J. M. G. Best wrote to TSE that Radio Lausanne wished to quote an extract from his 1936 broadcast for a program on contemporary English literature. Wishing to be certain that TSE had no objection, Best quoted the passage to be included but badly misquoted the opening sentence: "The requirements for a good play are just as severe for the verse dramatist as for the free dramatist." TSE replied on 6 Dec: "I have no recollection of having broadcast about Poetic Drama in 1936, but if you say so, I am sure I did. The words look as if they do come from me, but I think there must be a misprint. Your first sentence ends with the words 'the free dramatist.' It does not make sense, and I think the 'free' must be an error, instead of 'prose' dramatist. Will you please make the correction? // Otherwise, I have no objection to your sending this recording to Radio Lausanne" (Caversham).

7. The anonymous *Everyman*, which TSE taught in his 1918 extension course, is an allegorical morality play first printed in the early sixteenth century.

8. In his 1917 Extension lectures on modern English literature, TSE discussed Swinburne's early verse play *Atalanta in Calydon* (1865) (1.590). He frequently quoted from the chorus in such essays as *Ezra Pound: His Metric and Poetry* (1917) (1.633, 1.645 n.16), and "Swinburne as Poet" (1920) (2.184).

9. Feste's epilogue song, "When that I was and a little tiny boy," is at the end of act 5, scene 1.

10. *The Dog beneath the Skin; or, Where Is Francis? A Play in Three Acts*, by W. H. Auden and Christopher Isherwood, was published by Faber in 1935 and first performed by the Group Theatre in 1936, a production that TSE attended on 3 Mar. Auden and Isherwood's second collaboration, *The Ascent of F6: A Tragedy in Two Acts*, was also published by Faber in 1936 and performed the following year by the Group Theatre. TSE wrote to Auden on 8 May 1937 that he is "reading it with interest and thrills."

The Week's "Good Cause" Appeal: "The North Kensington Community Centre"[1]

In a remote corner of North Kensington near the line of the Great Western Railway, over against Kensal Green, there are living, in several blocks of Housing Trust Flats, some two thousand adults and three thousand children. Most of you never heard of this district, until you read of the visit of the Duchess of Kent a few days ago, an area you can walk round in ten minutes.[2] These are people of good London breed.[3] Before they were moved to these flats, they were living in Kensington in overcrowded decaying houses – many of them in damp sunless basements. Very few realise what a struggle the London poor will make to live decently in such surroundings. Now, these five thousand have a better opportunity.

This is a settlement, a colony which will soon be much larger when the new Peabody buildings are ready. We are trying to turn it into a community. The Community Centre, founded two years ago, built on a plot provided by the Borough Council, is an attempt to give these people a chance to become a community. It is a beautifully kept building: as the paid staff must be small, the people do a great deal of the work without pay. It is a co-operative centre. The people pay fixed small fees, and contribute towards the activities. You must not expect them to contribute much. The blight of this neighbourhood is partly unemployment, but largely casual employment.

I cannot tell you a fraction of what goes on in that building. If you visit it yourselves the Warden, Miss Jenkinson, will be glad to show it to you. It is the first experiment of the kind for the tenants of large blocks of buildings, and it works, very successfully, in co-operation with the Borough Council and the L.C.C. There is a Council Clinic in the building. L.C.C. classes are conducted in some of the rooms. But the greater part of the activities are run by the members themselves. One important activity, which I hope may be further developed, is the production of plays, both by adults and by children. And these people do have children. They are very attractive children as you would see if you visited the centre in the afternoon where there is likely to be a children's party. If you went in the evening, you would probably find, besides classes and indoor games, a dance for the young people or a social for their elders.

I am appealing for a particular need: a new hall. None of the rooms in the Centre is big enough for the purposes it has to serve. The new hall would have all sorts of uses, especially the gymnasium work which we cannot have at present. It would release some of the other rooms for new purposes: there is one small, quiet room that might well be converted into something that any Community Centre ought to have – a chapel. The building that we have cost £14,000 and the money has been provided. There is just enough ground left for the new hall. It will cost £5,000. That is just one pound each for the health and happiness of the 5,000 present inhabitants. It is not a large sum, per human being, is it? If you saw the children you would think them worth a pound each.

If you will help us to raise this £5,000 you will be helping five thousand of our best citizens in their ambition to build themselves into a community. I do not know of any five thousand people more ready to do their part.[4†] And in helping this Centre, so promisingly begun, you will at the same time be making more possible the starting of similar centres elsewhere. It is not a cut and dried idea: we must let it develop. I appeal in the name of our metropolitan population. I appeal for the future of a great part of England. But especially for three thousand of our best children, and for those to come whom I hope to know. Please send your contribution (for which I will thank you personally) to me "T. S. Eliot, North Kensington Community Centre, London, W. 10."[5]

NOTES

1. Broadcast on 24 Jan 1937 at 8:45 p.m. on the BBC's London Regional Service for the Kensington Council of Social Service. The previous year, H. B. Vaisey, Chairman of the North Kensington Community Centre Committee, had written to the *Times*, seeking support for "the erection of a large hall," the recently opened Community Centre having "already proved quite inadequate to meet the demands made upon it" (3 Aug 1936, 6). This and other community centers were organized under the London Committee for Voluntary Occupation during Unemployment, founded in 1933.

"On Friday," TSE wrote to Ottoline Morrell on 4 Jan, "I have to visit the Community Centre in North Kensington, because I have to do a five-minute Good Cause about it for the BBC on the 24th." On 10 Jan TSE wrote to Vaisey: "It is impossible to say what one wants to say in a 600 word telegram. . . . I can't do the really sentimental appeal. You need a [J. M.] Barrie for that. I have kept to my own line, which is usually qualified as 'cold and precise,' because if one tries to do what one's temperament forbids, one does worse." The three-page typescript, with emendations in TSE's and another's hand, is in the BBC archives, Caversham.

2. In "Visits to Social Centres / The Duke of Kent's London Tour," the *Times* of 20 Jan described the Duke's visit to the community centre in Dalgarno Gardens, North Kensington,

where with "keen interest" he "found 30 babies of between two and three years of age playing in a cheerfully decorated room open to the fresh air and sunshine. The Duke wanted to know how the nursery school was financed, how the children were cared for while their mothers were at work, and whether there was enough accommodation. Miss Sylvia Ellison, principal of the school, told him they had a long waiting list. From the nursery schools the Duke went to the clinic, where he found many mothers with their babies. He talked with the mothers for some time" (17). Princess Marina of Greece and Denmark (1906-68), later Duchess of Kent, had given birth to Princess Alexandra on the previous Christmas day and was not present on the tour.

3. On 14 Jan TSE wrote to Vaisey about the phrasing of this sentence: "I can quite understand that 'good English stock' might suggest a narrow racialism, and might offend those few who are not of English stock: and this of course I do not wish to do. But I don't like 'fine independence' either. What I am in horror of, in making an appeal of this kind, is any suggestion of being patronising to the less fortunate; and I feel something of this – in the word 'independence.' . . . Would it do just to say . . . 'They are people of good London breed'?"

4†. After this sentence, TSE has crossed out by hand the following remarks: "It is astonishing how the old Anglo-Saxon capacity for local self-government is latent in such people, and what its exercise does for them, who have never had any real part in government before."

5. "I have no [radio] set of my own," TSE wrote in his letter to Vaisey of 10 Jan, "(I have got to get one, much as I loathe it) and I have not listened to an 'appeal' for a long time. . . . But if it would help for me to say 'and I will thank you for them personally,' I am willing to sign any number of letters if the BBC or Centre would type them for me to sign: and of course would be ready to write my own letters in response to any whopping or particularly touching contributions. But my experience in trying to get good money for good causes leads me to believe that if I appeal for £5000 the expectations are £49 and some pence." The final result of the appeal was £97.13.6.

After Vaisey wrote to express his appreciation for the broadcast, TSE replied on 3 Feb that "the result of broadcasting on behalf of your Centre is to give me a kind of feeling of responsibility toward it."

A Commentary

The Criterion: A Literary Review, 16 (Jan 1937) 289-93

Those who would like to believe in the progress of political institutions can take no honest satisfaction either in events in Spain or in the opinions and sympathies which these events have tended to arouse in this country.[1] What has to be remarked is rather a deterioration of political thinking, with a pressure on everyone, which has to be stubbornly resisted, to accept one extreme philosophy or another. The situation at the moment of writing is not yet quite that of two great groups of nations, aligned against each other with a fanaticism (complicated with self-interest) that no previous combinations and coalitions in our time have shown: at present, and from our point of view, it is rather that of an international civil war of opposed ideas. The present danger for us, as individuals in this country, is that the precarious balance of ideas in our heads may be upset by one or the other extreme view, according to our individual backgrounds and temperaments. As I have suggested, the greater part of the Press not only does nothing to restrain this disintegration, but actually tends to hasten it: by simplifying the issues in very different and very imperfectly understood countries, by resolving emotional tension in the minds of their readers by directing their sympathies all one way, and consequently encouraging mental sloth.

One might think, after perusing a paper like *The New Statesman*, that the elected Government of Spain represented an enlightened and progressive Liberalism;[2] and from reading *The Tablet* one might be persuaded that the rebels were people who, after enduring with patience more than one would expect human beings to be able to stand, had finally and reluctantly taken to arms as the only way left in which to save Christianity and civilization.[3] Now an ideally unprejudiced person, with an intimate knowledge of Spain, its history, its racial characteristics, and its contemporary personalities, might be in a position to come to the conclusion that he should, in the longest view that could be seen, support one side rather than the other. But so long as we are not compelled in our own interest to take sides, I do not see why we should do so on insufficient knowledge: and even any eventual partisanship should be held with reservations, humility and misgiving. That balance of mind which a few highly-civilized individuals, such as

Arjuna, the hero of the *Bhagavad Gita*, can maintain in action, is difficult for most of us even as observers, and, as I say, is not encouraged by the greater part of the Press.[4]

One tendency of which we must take account is that of the winning "idea" to deteriorate. Political fanaticism in releasing generous passions will release evil ones too. Whichever side wins will not be the better for having had to fight for its victory. The victory of the Right will be the victory of a secular Right, not of a spiritual Right, which is a very different thing; the victory of the Left will be the victory of the worst rather than of the best features; and if it ends in something called Communism, that will be a travesty of the humanitarian ideals which have led so many people in that direction. And those who have at heart the interests of Christianity in the long run – which is not quite the same thing as a nominal respect paid to an ecclesiastical hierarchy with a freedom circumscribed by the interests of a secular State – have especial reason for suspending judgment.

Some people have agitated for the raising of the embargo on the export of arms to the Spanish Government. But at this stage of the game, I suspect that those who "support the popular demand that the ban on the export of arms to the Spanish Government be lifted"[5] are really asking us to commit ourselves to one side in a conflict between two ideas: that of Berlin and that of Moscow, neither of which seems to have very much to do with "democracy."

Irresponsible zealots who have advocated "intervention" on one side or the other – who advocate, that is to say, the overt supply of arms – will never be deterred by considerations such as these;[6] but they would do well to read Mr. Bertrand Russell's *Which Way to Peace* (Michael Joseph [1936]: 7s. 6d. net). The last book of Mr. Russell's that I read, some years ago, seemed to have sunk to a level so low that recovery was impossible:[7] but this book is a brilliant piece of writing. I am even here more than doubtful of Lord Russell's conclusions; but in his exposition of the present international situation he shows an exceptional sense of realities.[8] He is quite aware of the difference between political theory and political actuality; he knows that if alliances or coalitions have to be formed, they will be properly dictated by circumstances and interests, not by sympathies with one political philosophy or another.[9] On the other hand, he is not deceived about the League of Nations, and he demolishes the position of the pacifist-militarists such as Professor Gilbert Murray.[10]

Mr. Russell has, I think, no illusions that his prescriptions are likely to be taken: it would be idle to criticize them on that assumption. They seem at

worst less desperate than Mr. Aldous Huxley's quasi-mystical recipes,[11] although they could not be applied, in any case, until nations came to regard as axiomatic that there is much more to be lost than to be gained by any war. And so far as his particular prescription for Britain is concerned – that she should disarm, yield her colonies to whoever wished to take them (he does not say what we ought to do if one of the English-speaking dominions was invaded) and content herself with being a small Scandinavian country[12] – there appears to be an objection to his argument more serious than the chimerical nature of the hope that the nation would accept it. He admits that this would involve economic readjustment, but does no more than make this admission.[13] If he could write a book which would show us exactly what economic readjustment would do the trick, he would be performing a great service. Meanwhile, he speaks as if this change in the political status of Britain would temporarily inconvenience only the rich:[14] I cannot see why it would not inconvenience everybody pretty seriously. One is left with the suspicion that he has put the political cart before the economic horse; but meanwhile one agrees cordially that while seeking an economic solution of the difficulties between nations – and then, what is equally important, educating people to accept it – we can only hope to keep the peace as long as possible.

Anyone who fails to appreciate the difficulties of educating the public, and of educating its educators, should not only consider the muddle of the Educational System in general, but should read Miss Jane Soames's book *The English Press* (with a preface by Hilaire Belloc. Stanley Nott [1936]: 3s. 6d. net). He might at the same time re-read George Blake's pamphlet of some years ago: *The Press and the Public*.[15] Miss Soames is primarily concerned with the oppressive effect – a kind of anonymous censorship – exercised by the Law of Libel.[16] Unrestricted freedom to libel people has its abuses, but we seem to have gone much too far in the other direction. Miss Soames also has a good deal to say about the condition of the Press in general, and the corresponding condition of the Public. There is very little in the book that is actually news to people who think. But even the people who think, and that is a small minority, are only thinking for a part of the time; and we are all the time exposed to the Press, and to "news" shot at us in various forms: so we need a constant reminder of how little we know, and how garbled that little is. We need a constant reminder, too, of how

little we remember, and therefore of how little we learn from experience. No honest man can pretend that he is ever free from irrational influences, or that he has any complete prophylactic against the infection of shouting with the mob, except the equally undesirable habit of automatically shouting against it.

Among those in our time who kept up the struggle to think for themselves, one is reminded of A. R. Orage, the Memoir of whom by Philip Mairet (with an Introduction by G. K. Chesterton. Dent: 8s. 6d. net) does not convey quite all the best of Orage, and certainly not the best of Mairet.[17] Orage is not a very good sitter for a biographical portrait: the sum of what he did and what he thought can give but a very diminished estimate of his importance in his time. He is not in fact important as a man who actually succeeded in thinking for himself: at most, he succeeded in being a mouthpiece for minority thinkers of very different value. He is remarkable, not so much for intellect as for character: his apparent instability, in devoting himself to cause after cause, is the instability of the half-educated, not the instability of the vacillating in purpose. However he behaved, he had some of the essential selflessness of the saint; whatever he believed, he was seeking one faith; and his greatest deception was to have been offered a magic when he was seeking a religion. His distinction as an editor is such as posterity may find it difficult to understand, for posterity will not appreciate the conditions under which the most valuable thing an editor could do was to offer an asylum to non-conformists of all descriptions. His distinction as a critic – it is my one specific criticism of Mr. Mairet's book that this is not dealt with – is due not so much to intellectual subtlety or great sensitiveness as to an honesty which could not be deceived except generously and on a large scale.

On October 22nd the Bishop of Durham added something to the meaning of the word "revolutionary," for he said, in writing to *The Times* about the Jarrow marchers, that "[t]he policy of marches is, in my view, a revolutionary policy." It is revolutionary because it "involves substituting for the provisions of the Constitution the method of organized mob pressure."[18] Organized mob pressure was presumably the crime of those who participated in the Pilgrimage of Grace, as well as that of the Tolpuddle Martyrs.[19] But it confounds my intellect to discern where the line is now to be drawn between organized mob pressure and Constitutional methods, or

indeed between a Parliamentary majority and an organized mob: though a Parliamentary minority may sometimes be qualified as a disorganized mob.

T. S. E.

NOVEMBER 18TH, 1936.

NOTES

1. The Spanish Civil War had broken out the preceding July, pitting the Republican forces of the Second Spanish Republic against the insurgent Nationalist forces led by General Francisco Franco. The Republicans, or Loyalists, were funded by the Soviet Union and aided by foreign volunteers, while the Nationalists were supported by Germany and Italy. Though localized in Spain, the civil war was seen as a battle between communist and fascist ideologies, and was feared as a rehearsal of the larger conflict that would erupt in World War II.

2. The socialist-leaning *New Statesman* was begun in 1913 as a weekly magazine of politics and literature.

3. Founded in 1840, *The Tablet* was, by the 1930s, a conservative weekly review that promoted an ultramontanist, Roman Catholic viewpoint.

4. TSE would later include the figures of Krishna and Arjuna "On the field of battle" in *The Dry Salvages* (*CPP* 187-88 / *Poems1* 197-98). TSE studied the *Bhagavad Gita* in Charles Lanman's course on Indic Philology at Harvard in 1911-12.

5. "Declaration on Spain," signed by Hugh Sykes Davies and ten others in the name of the Surrealist Group in England; published in *Contemporary Poetry and Prose* (7 Nov 1936) as an unpaginated insert bound between pp. 130-31.

6. "Declaration on Spain" asserts that the British government "has assisted in the crime of non-intervention; it has refused to allow the export of arms to a Government democratically constituted, and has regarded with equanimity the assistance given by Fascist powers to the rebels." The declaration ends with a bold-type call: "Arms for the People of Spain."

7. Reviewing Russell's *Why I Am Not a Christian* (1927) in the *Criterion* of Aug 1927, TSE sniffs: "Just as Mr. Russell's Radicalism in politics is merely a variety of Whiggery, so his Non-Christianity is merely a variety of Low Church sentiment. That is why his pamphlet is a curious, and a pathetic, document" (3.162). In his Jan 1931 "Commentary," TSE lumps Russell's *The Conquest of Happiness* (1930) together with Freud's *Civilization and its Discontents*, remarking: "It is not so much that both books are odd mixtures of shrewdness and commonplace. It is rather that mankind is so constituted that many of us can never hope to rise to that level of mediocrity which these authors exhort us to reach" (4.218).

8. In the first two chapters, Russell lays out his analysis of the contemporary international situation: "The Imminent Danger of War" and "The Nature of the Next War."

9. Though Russell's book is informed throughout with a sense of "political actuality" rather than theorizing, he articulates this necessity of working for what is possible, within realistic time frames: "As an individual, [the pacifist] will adhere to his full creed, and do what he can to spread it, but as a man concerned with the present action of the State he will be willing to work with men who share only a small part of his beliefs" (192). "[P]acifism, so far as the near future

is concerned, must be individual, and must not expect to capture the State" (219). Russell's fifth chapter, "Alliances" considers the multiple interests and shifting grounds that make and break alliances in postwar Europe under the League of Nations.

10. Chapter 4, "Collective Security," addresses the weaknesses of the League of Nations. Among Russell's many critiques are his claims that "the League becomes part of a new technique of imperialism, and of a new propaganda which . . . turns idealists into war-mongers" (73) and the paradox that the "sentiment which supports the League of Nations is mainly a pacifist sentiment, and yet the League cannot be effective unless it is willing, on occasion, to make war" (74).

Russell is critical of what he calls "partial pacifism": "Every form of partial pacifism has the merit of diminishing the number of possible *casus belli*, but it may have the disadvantage of leading ultimately to a war more difficult than it need have been. . . . In some such way, every form of partial pacifism breaks down. If we are to defend our own soil efficiently, we need allies, a complicated foreign policy, and a willingness to go to war about issues that do not directly concern us" (134-35).

Though not an absolute pacifist (and Russell does not mention his name), Gilbert Murray defended conscientious objectors during World War I. He wrote in the cause of peace in various tracts and articles, the most recent of which included "Revision of the Peace Treaties" (in *The Intelligent Man's Way to Prevent War with Others*, ed. Leonard Woolf, 1933) and *Then and Now* (1935). In the *Criterion* of July 1929, there appeared a favorable notice of Murray's *The Ordeal of This Generation*, probably written by TSE (766; see *L5* 84).

11. In his *Criterion* "Commentary" of July 1936, TSE briefly dismisses Huxley's peace pamphlet *What Are You Going to Do about It? The Case for Constructive Peace* (5.468-69). And in his introduction to *Revelation*, TSE explains his objections more fully, targeting Huxley's "psychological mysticism" as "very suspect indeed": "It may turn out to be merely an occult means of getting one's own way; it may foster the *libido dominandi*. Mr. Huxley would be the last to deny this; only he would insist that to meditate to bring about peace is obviously to meditate for a good cause. So far, so good: but from a Christian point of view – from any religious point of view – it cannot be an ultimate good cause, inasmuch as peace itself (the peace of this world) is not an end but a means" (5.484).

On 24 July 1936, TSE writes to Huxley: "I still feel a little unhappy about the psychological mysticism at the end of your pamphlet. It does seem to me that unless one has the space to make this explicit, it may be taken very queerly by some readers. I do feel that the latter part of your pamphlet shifts to quite a different plane from the first. I feel that it is a much more important plane and that therefore the brevity of that discussion leaves one unsatisfied. I feel that anything like the practice of meditation ought to be clearly founded on some purpose more profound than simply the desire to maintain what we call a state of peace."

12. That Britain should disarm is part of Russell's strategy for a larger, international order to take over collective security: "It is clear that collective security, as a method of preventing war, cannot succeed unless there is an international armed force, under the orders of an international authority, and sufficiently strong to be able to defeat easily any probable combination of rebel States" (80). That Britain should yield her colonies is premised on the size of the empire and the expense of defending it: "Without force, we should lose it all: Gibraltar, Malta, the Suez Canal, Aden, the oil of Southern Persia, India, and Hong Kong; Kenya, Nigeria, and Jamaica – places

which minister to the pride of all of us and the pockets of a favoured few" (138). Russell holds up several small Scandinavian countries as models: "The policy of pacifism, as I understand it, would consist in our imitating Denmark by enormously diminishing our army, navy, and air force . . ." (137). The Commander-in-Chief of the newly constituted international armed forces "should be chosen from some small essentially neutral country such as Norway or Sweden" (82).

13. Russell writes: "Our economic system is intimately bound up with our Empire, and loss of territory will infallibly involve some loss of income. But the loss will be tiny compared to the cost of a war" (145-46).

14. After giving "self-government to India, and hand[ing] over our African possessions to an international authority," and selling Jamaica to the United States "for a good round sum," "[s]ome capitalists, with investments in Crown Colonies, would lose money, but, as the income tax could be halved, even capitalists would gain on the whole" (138-39).

15. George Blake (1893-1961) was a Scottish novelist and journalist. *The Press and the Public* appeared as part of the Criterion Miscellany, No. 21, London: Faber & Faber, 1930.

16. Only one chapter of eight in Soames's book is devoted to "The Law of Libel." As elaborated in common law, English protection against defamation can be traced back to the Statute of Westminster of 1275, whose thirty-fourth chapter established the crime of *scandalum magnatum*, intended to protect members of the peerage from false reports. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, English defamation law was generally considered stricter than in other countries, siding more readily with the plaintiff. Soames cites approvingly the barrister Dennis Pritt's description of the "so-called 'Law'" as having become "so technical and complicated in its structure (or lack of structure), so uncertain in its operations and so all-embracing and capricious in its results that few writers or publishers can contemplate without dismay the risk of practical experience of its working" (quoted in Soames, 32). She concludes: "the Law of Libel . . . operates as a very strict censorship upon the publication of anything *damaging to the Government or the existing state of affairs in general*" (47-48).

17. *A. R. Orage: A Memoir* (London, 1936). TSE's memorial tributes to Orage appeared in the Nov 1934 issue of *NEW* (5.146) and in the *Criterion* of Jan 1935 (5.148).

18. "The Methods of Marches" in the *Times* of 24 Oct 1936 is signed "Herbert Dunelm: October 22" (13). His given name was Herbert Hensley Henson; by tradition, the Bishop of Durham replaces his own family name with the Latin form of Durham. In his letter to the editor, the bishop objects to all organized marches, insisting that parliamentary representation is sufficient to press the case of any constituency with a grievance or concern.

With wide support among political, business, and religious factions, 1,200 men of Jarrow – a shipbuilding town on the River Tyne, then suffering from over 60 percent unemployment among adult males – began their march to Parliament to draw attention to the problems of unemployment and to demand action in rebuilding industry. The march began on 5 Oct and was blessed by the Bishop of Jarrow, James Geoffrey Gordon.

19. The Pilgrimage of Grace was a Catholic rebellion in Yorkshire against a number of Henry VIII's policies, but especially Cromwell's taxations and the dissolution of the monasteries. In 1536, Robert Aske and some 30,000 others occupied York, where they reinstituted Catholic liturgical practices and returned expelled monks to their monasteries. Through negotiations,

Thomas Howard, 3rd Duke of Norfolk, eventually regained control by promising pardons. But the leaders and over two hundred rebels were arrested and executed a few months later, after the army had been dispersed.

In 1834, six farmers from Tolpuddle, in Dorset, were convicted and sentenced under the Unlawful Oaths Act of 1797 for swearing a secret oath as members of their trade guild, the Friendly Society of Agricultural Labourers. Public outcry, including a march, led to the commutation of their sentence in 1836.

Paul Elmer More[1]

Princeton Alumni Weekly, 37 (5 Feb 1937) [373]-74

The place of Paul More's writings in my own life has been of such a kind that I find easiest, and perhaps most effective, to treat it in a kind of autobiographical way. What is significant to me – and it is of objective significance as well – is not simply the conclusion at which he arrived, but the fact that he *arrived* there from somewhere else; and not simply that he came from somewhere else, but that he took a particular route. And conversely, the point at which he has arrived gives an importance to the stages of the journey which was not apparent before. If I find an analogy with my own journey, that is perhaps of interest to no one but myself, except in so far as it explains my retrospective appreciation of the *Shelburne Essays*; for my appreciation of the whole work cannot be disengaged from the way in which I arrived at it.

When I was an undergraduate at Harvard, More was editor of the *Nation*, and to occupy that position in those days was to be a public figure.[2] I sometimes read the *Nation* and I sometimes read a Shelburne Essay, but I cannot remember that I liked or disliked More's writings: I was interested in other things, if I had any interests at all. I think it was partly that, in a period of notable sterility for creative literature, I wanted a kind of food that the current tradition of writing in England and America did not provide. And as my reading took the form of saturating my mind in the work of a few poets, rather than a systematic study of literature, I certainly did not have the background for appreciating the kind of critical intelligence at work in the *Shelburne Essays* – to say nothing of Ste.-Beuve. It was not until my senior year, as a pupil of Babbitt's, that More's work was forced on my attention: for one of the obligations of any pupil of Babbitt was to learn a proper respect for "my friend More."[3] But while one was directly exposed to so powerful an influence as Babbitt's, everything that one read was merely a supplement to Babbitt.

It was not until one or two of the volumes of *The Greek Tradition* had appeared that More began to have any importance for me.[4] It was possibly Irving Babbitt himself in 1927 or 1928, in a conversation in London during which I had occasion to indicate the steps I had recently taken, who first

made me clearly cognizant of the situation.[5] In the later volumes of *The Greek Tradition*, and in the acquaintance and friendship subsequently formed, I came to find an auxiliary to my own progress of thought, which no English theologian at the time could have given me. The English theologians, born and brought up in the surroundings of private belief and public form, and often themselves descended from ecclesiastics, at any rate living mostly in an environment of religious practice, did not seem to me to know enough of the new world of barbarism and infidelity that was forming all about them. The English Church was familiar with the backslider, but it knew nothing of the convert – certainly not of the convert who had come such a long journey. I might almost say that I never met any Christians until after I had made up my mind to become one. It was of the greatest importance, then, to have at hand the work of a man who had come by somewhat the same route, to almost the same conclusions, at almost the same time: with a maturity, a weight of scholarship, a discipline of thinking, which I did not, and never shall, possess.[6]

I had met More only once in earlier years – at a reception given by the Babbitts to which some of Babbitt's pupils had the honor of invitation – and that remained only a visual memory. My first meeting with him in London, however, seemed more like the renewal of an old acquaintance than the formation of a new one: More was a St. Louisan, and had known my family; and if he had remained there a few years longer, he would have taught me Greek as he had taught my brother. Our subsequent meetings have all been at considerable intervals. I shall always remember with particular pleasure several days in Oxford in his company, in the summer of 1933.[7]

I still consider *The Greek Tradition* More's greatest work. There are theological points which will always be matters of contention, but I do not know of any book which gives such a masterly treatment of the process through which Greek thought influenced Christianity. And what will keep the work permanently alive – and the same may be said, now that we have this, of his earlier writings too – is that nowhere is it a mere exercise of intellect, intelligence, and erudition, or the mere demonstration of a thesis held by the mind. I dislike to use the worn and soiled phrase "spiritual pilgrimage," but More's works are, in the deepest sense, his autobiography. One is always aware of the sincerity, and in the later works the Christian humility (a very rare virtue too) of the concentrated mind seeking God: still with restless curiosity analyzing the disease and the aberrations of

humanity, but too intent ever to care to display mere intellectual brilliance, and too patient ever to feel any petty irritation and impatience with a mischievous and inattentive world.

There are points, certainly, upon which even I, with an incomparably inferior equipment and ability for theological thinking, would venture to disagree. In his treatment of Christian Mysticism (in *The Catholic Faith*) he seems to me to fail to appreciate the greatness of St. John of the Cross.[8] And in his introduction to *Anglicanism* he seems to me more Anglican than the Anglicans, and to write as if the English Church began with Hooker.[9] He fails, that is, to emphasize the continuity of the Church: one might think that it was the invention of Hooker. He does not give recognition to the probable importance of the mystics of the fourteenth century – of Richard Rolle and Julian of Norwich for instance[10] – as late as the time of Lancelot Andrewes and George Herbert. But his understanding of the spirit of Anglicanism is remarkable, and even the most learned and thoughtful of those bred and born in that faith, will understand it the better for having studied More.

To read the more recent *Shelburne Essays* (and the "Marginalia") is to be astonished at a mind which can never grow old, and which is always seeking understanding, humility, and improvement;[11] to return to the earliest, is to be astonished at a mind which was always mature. Yet between the first and the last a very long journey has been taken. Not that there are not everywhere evident, as in the work of every good mind, principles that remain unchanged. More, like Babbitt, seems almost to have been born in a state of emancipation from the prejudices of his time and place. Many people give the appearance of progress by shedding the prejudices and irrational postulates of one generation only to acquire those of the next: by "keeping up to date." What is out of date in More's writings is only what he has put out of date himself: and he would be the first to identify it. Where a critic runs the greatest risk of appearing foolish, even within his own lifetime, is in his judgments of his contemporaries, or of those nearly contemporary: but if you turn back to More's essay, say on a poet like Lionel Johnson or Arthur Symons, you will not find much to dispute.[12]

It must remain a matter of regret that in later years More and Babbitt were obliged to diverge. To those who have found it necessary to take the way of the Catholic Church, the regret will be particularly acute.[13] Yet, in such a generous friendship, I am sure that each regarded the other as the greater man. It is as impossible as it is useless for us to come to any

judgment. And from the point of view of their usefulness to the world, we may regard this divergence itself as capable of a great utility to us, if we can see our way to avail ourselves of it. For it points to the decision that we must all of us, if we follow our thought to the bitter end, find ourselves compelled to make. That is, unless we have already made the easier choice of some shoddy philosophy which they would both of them denounce. The diversity of created beings is very great, and one is hardly likely to do justice to all: but these seem to me the two *wisest* men that I have known.

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. TSE wrote to Princeton professor Willard Thorp, who had commissioned the essay in honor of his gravely ill colleague, on 14 Jan 1937: "I enclose a short paper on More, in response to your letter of the 23d December. . . . If I knew that it was [an] obituary, I should be more personal; if I knew that it would not be an obituary, I should be more critical. . . . This is a eulogy and a 'demonstration.' I think that in some ways More's theology is rather narrow and defective; that he tends to emphasise those things in Anglicanism which were absent from the doctrine of his childhood, and to ignore things which the two have in common. I think he remains a little sectarian, and not wholly orthodox. But this is not the place, nor am I quite the person, to sift his work in this way. Then he is 'anglophile,' in that he sees the excellence of English institutions where a person resident here is more likely to see their shortcomings and corruptions. And I suspect that in some of his views on contemporary political affairs he was a somewhat conventional conservative: but I am not sure. It is difficult anyway to be sure except when two people have common knowledge of one field of political action." As to the "doctrine of his childhood," More was raised in the Presbyterian faith. He died on 9 Mar.

2. A conservative weekly magazine of politics and culture founded in 1865, *The Nation* was edited by More from 1909, when TSE was in his senior year at Harvard, to 1914, just before the outbreak of World War I.

3. One of TSE's earliest reviews after submitting his doctoral dissertation in Apr 1916 was of More's *Aristocracy and Justice* (1915), the ninth volume of the *Shelburne Essays* (of 11 vols, 1904-21), in the *New Statesman* of June 1916 (1.406).

4. More's *Platonism* (1917) and *The Religion of Plato* (1921) were the first two volumes of *The Greek Tradition* (5 vols, 1917-27), followed by *Hellenistic Philosophies* (1923), *The Christ of the New Testament* (1924), and *Christ the Word* (1927).

5. TSE wrote to Ottoline Morrell on 2 Oct 1928, "It has been particularly good to have had Irving Babbitt and Paul More here in the same summer" (*L4* 269). Babbitt arrived while TSE was arranging the essays, including "The Humanism of Irving Babbitt," for publication in *For Lancelot Andrewes*, and before he wrote the Preface, which Babbitt influenced by urging him to "come out into the open" as "classicist in literature, royalist in politics, and anglo-catholic in religion" (see 3.514 n.3). TSE met More in London in mid-September and sent him a proof copy of the volume on 28 Sept.

6. Though More was twenty-four years older than TSE, he too was born in St. Louis; earned his BA from Washington University in 1887; taught Latin at the Smith Academy until 1892 (where TSE was a student from 1898 to 1905); was raised in a form of American Protestantism (Presbyterian for him, Unitarian for TSE); studied Sanskrit and Pali at Harvard; and converted to a more orthodox Anglicanism. On 11 Jan 1937, after reading More's "Marginalia" (see n.11 below), TSE wrote to More: "What touches me most closely is a suggestion, here and there, of a spiritual biography which . . . is oddly, even grotesquely, more like my own . . . than that of any human being I have known. And when you say 'I have often wondered what line my experience might have taken had I been brought up in a form of worship from which the office of the imagination and of the aesthetic emotions had not been so ruthlessly evicted . . .' I have made the same speculation. But I am inclined to think that I know how to value these things better, just for having (being me) to struggle so long, and for so many years so blindly and errantly, towards them. – May one say, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit?"

7. TSE had lectured on "The Bible and English Literature" at Princeton University on 23 Mar 1933 and spent the night as More's guest. On 26 Mar, he wrote to More with thanks: "The rare evenings which I have had with you are all memorable . . . I am . . . increasingly appreciative of the rare contacts in which one does not speak a wholly different language from the other person" (*Lo* 569). On returning to England, he wrote to his Harvard host Theodore Spencer on 19 July that he was to address "the Anglo-Catholic Summer School of Sociology at Oxford on Monday, and shall while away a few days there with Paul More on the banks of the Ilyssus." TSE alludes to the Isis that flows through Oxford University as the Illissos that flowed through ancient Athens.

8. *The Catholic Faith* (1931) was reprinted as *Christian Mysticism: A Critique* (1932).

9. While TSE insists upon the continuity of the Church of England with the Church as it existed before the reign of Henry VIII, he discusses in "Lancelot Andrewes" (1926) the importance of Richard Hooker's theological efforts to "complete the structure of the English Church" through the *via media* and the influential policies developed in his *Laws of Ecclesiastical Policy* (2.818).

10. Richard Rolle (ca. 1290-1349), English mystic and author of Biblical commentaries and other religious writings, best known for his *Incendium amoris* [The Fire of Love], a description of the three stages of his mystical experiences. TSE next mentions Rolle in a letter to John Hayward on 2 Sept 1940: in the process of writing "Little Gidding" he "wanted to give greater historical depth to the other great period, i.e. the 14th century. Juliana and The Cloud of Unknowing represent pretty well the two mystical extremes, or, one might say, the male and female of this literature. I might have dragged in Walter Hilton and Richard Rolle, I daresay, but for one thing I don't know them so well and for another I think that would be over doing it."

11. The *New Shelburne Essays* (3 vols), included *The Demon of the Absolute* (1928), *The Sceptical Approach to Religion* (1934), and *On Being Human* (1936). More's "Marginalia," dictated from his bed during the year of his final illness, appeared in the *American Review* of Nov 1936 (1-30), so-called "because they were suggested by scribbling annotations on the margin of my books, or by reflection on the margin of life. In part they are autobiographical, or at least approach that, to me, rather distasteful form of literature as close as, probably, I shall ever come" (1).

12. The essays appear in More's *Shelburne Essays. First Series* (New York and London: Putnam, 1904). In "Arthur Symons: The Two Illusions" (1902), More states that he "would not

leave the word despair as the last comment on these poems, which, no matter what their sadness and morbidness may be, stand quite apart from the ordinary versifying of the day. Mr. Symons impresses us . . . as being the only genuine and adequate representative in English of that widespread condition which we call decadence." In "Two Poets of the Irish Movement: W. B. Yeats and Lionel Johnson" (1903), More compared Yeats unfavorably with both Johnson and Symons. Where he found in Johnson "something in him of the classic saint," he found in Yeats's recent works not only "sickliness" and "wasteful revery" but "a sense of failure and decay, rather than of mastery and growth" (177). More states that it is Johnson's "'ecstasy of combat,' this triumph in defeat, that in my judgment, marks Mr. Johnson as the one great . . . and genuinely significant poet of the present Gaelic movement" (190). More further asserts that "the real kinship of Mr. Yeats's present style is that of Arthur Symons, himself a disciple of the French decadents; only one must add in justice that no taint of moral degeneration has appeared in the Irish writer – and that is much to concede to a decadent" (181).

13. More, during his study of humanism with Babbitt, moved from the Presbyterian to the Episcopal and finally to the Anglican Church, whereas Babbitt made a religion of humanism. "Mr. Babbitt makes it very clear," TSE writes in "The Humanism of Irving Babbitt" (1928), "that he cannot accept any dogma or revelation; and that humanism is the *alternative* to religion" (3.454). "Had Babbitt ever been converted," TSE writes in "An Anglican Platonist," "he could only, we believe, have been converted to Rome. More was naturally a convert to Canterbury" (5.570).

The Church's Message to the World

The Listener, 17 (17 Feb 1937) [293]-94, 326[1]

That there is an antithesis between the Church and the World is a belief we derive from the highest authority. We know also from our reading of history, that a certain tension between Church and State is desirable. When Church and State fall out completely, it is ill with the commonwealth; and when Church and State get on too well together, there is something wrong with the Church. But the distinction between the Church and the World is not so easy to draw as that between Church and State. Here we mean not any one communion or ecclesiastical organisation but the whole number of Christians as Christians; and we mean not any particular State, but the whole of society, the world over, in its secular aspect. The antithesis is not simply between two opposed groups of individuals: every individual is himself a field in which the forces of the Church and the World struggle.

By "the Church's message to the World" you might think that what was meant was only the business of the Church to go on talking. I should like to make it more urgent by expanding the title to "the Church's business to interfere with the World." What is often assumed, and it is a principle that I wish to oppose, is the principle of live-and-let-live. It is assumed that if the State leaves the Church alone, and to some extent protects it from molestation, then the Church has no right to interfere with the organisation of society, or with the conduct of those who deny its beliefs. It is assumed that any such interference would be the oppression of the majority by a minority. Christians must take a very different view of their duty. But before suggesting *how* the Church should interfere with the World, we must try to answer the question: *why* should it interfere with the World?

It must be said bluntly that between the Church and the World there is no permanent *modus vivendi* possible. We may unconsciously draw a false analogy between the position of the Church in a secular society and the position of a dissenting sect in a Christian society. The situation is very different. A dissenting minority in a Christian society can persist because of the fundamental beliefs it has in common with that society, because of a common morality and of common grounds of Christian action. Where there is a different morality there is conflict. I do not mean that the Church

exists primarily for the propagation of Christian morality: morality is a means and not an end. The Church exists for the glory of God and the sanctification of souls: Christian morality is part of the means by which these ends are to be attained. But because Christian morals are based on fixed beliefs which cannot change they also are essentially unchanging: while the beliefs and in consequence the morality of the secular world can change from individual to individual, or from generation to generation, or from nation to nation. To accept two ways of life in the same society, one for the Christian and another for the rest, would be for the Church to abandon its task of evangelising the World. For the more alien the non-Christian world becomes, the more difficult becomes its conversion.

The Church is not merely for the elect – in other words, those whose temperament brings them to that belief and that behaviour. Nor does it allow us to be Christian in some social relations and non-Christian in others. It wants everybody, and it wants each individual as a whole. It therefore must struggle for a condition of society which will give the maximum of opportunity for us to lead wholly Christian lives, and the maximum of opportunity for others to become Christians. It maintains the paradox that while we are each responsible for our own souls, we are all responsible for all other souls, who are, like us, on their way to a future state of heaven or hell. And – another paradox – as the Christian attitude towards peace, happiness and well-being of peoples is that they are a means and not an end in themselves, Christians are more deeply committed to realizing these ideals than are those who regard them as ends in themselves.

Now, *how* is the Church to interfere in the World? I do not propose to take up the rest of my time by denouncing Fascism and Communism.[2] This task has been more ably performed by others, and the conclusions may be taken for granted. By pursuing this charge, I might obtain from you a kind of approval that I do not want. I suspect that a good deal of the dislike of these philosophies in this country is due to the wrong reasons as well as the right, and is coloured with complacency and sanctimony. It is easy, safe and pleasant to criticise foreigners; and it has the advantage of distracting attention from the evils of our own society. We must distinguish also between our opposition to *ideas* and disapproval of *practices*. Both Fascism and Communism have fundamental ideas which are incompatible with Christianity. But in practice, a Fascist or a Communist State might realise its idea more or less, and might be more or less tolerable. And on the other hand, the practices, or others equally objectionable, might easily

intrude themselves into a society nominally attached to quite different principles. We need not assume that our form of constitutional democracy is the only one suitable for a Christian people, or that it is in itself a guarantee against an anti-Christian world. Instead of merely condemning Fascism and Communism, therefore, we might do well to consider that we also live in a mass-civilisation following many wrong ambitions and wrong desires, and that if our society renounces completely its obedience to God, it will become no better, and possibly worse, than some of those abroad which are popularly execrated.

By "the World," then, I mean for my present purpose particularly the World in this island. The influence of the Church can be exerted in several ways. It may oppose, or it may support, particular actions at particular times. It is acclaimed when it supports any cause that is already assured of a good deal of secular support: it is attacked, quite naturally, when it opposes anything that people think they want. Whether people say that the Church ought to interfere, or whether they say it ought to mind its own business, depends mostly on whether they agree or disagree with its attitude upon the issue of the moment. A very difficult problem arises whenever there is occasion for the Church to resist any innovation – either in legislation or in social practice – which is contrary to Christian principles. To those who deny, or do not fully accept, Christian doctrine, or who wish to interpret it according to their private lights, such resistance often appears oppressive. To the unreasoning mind the Church can often be made to appear to be the enemy of progress and enlightenment. The Church may not always be strong enough to resist successfully: but I do not see how it can ever accept as a permanent settlement one law for itself and another for the World.

I do not wish, however, to pursue the question of the kinds of issue which may arise from time to time. I want to suggest that a task for the Church in our age is a more profound scrutiny of our society, which shall start from the question: to what depth is the foundation of our society not merely neutral, but positively anti-Christian?

It ought not to be necessary for me to insist that the final aims of the churchman, and the aims of the secular reformer, are very different. So far as the aims of the latter are for true social justice, they ought to be comprehended in those of the former. But one reason why the lot of the secular reformer or revolutionist seems to me to be the easier is this: that for the most part he conceives of the evils of the world as something external to himself. They are thought of either as completely impersonal, so that there

is nothing to alter but machinery; or if there is evil *incarnate*, it is always incarnate in the *other people* – a class, a race, the politicians, the bankers, the armament makers, and so forth – never in oneself. There are individual exceptions: but so far as a man sees the need for converting *himself* as well as the World, he is approximating to the religious point of view. But for most people, to be able to simplify issues so as to see only the definite external enemy, is extremely exhilarating, and brings about the bright eye and the springy step that go so well with the political uniform. This is an exhilaration that the Christian must deny himself. It comes from an artificial stimulant bound to have bad after-effects. It causes pride, either individual or collective, and pride brings its own doom. For only in humility, charity and purity – and most of all perhaps humility – can we be prepared to receive the grace of God without which human operations are vain.

It is not enough simply to see the evil and injustice and suffering of this world, and precipitate oneself into action. We must know, what only theology can tell us, why these things are wrong. Otherwise, we may right some wrongs at the cost of creating new ones. If this is a world in which I, and the majority of my fellow-beings, live in that perpetual distraction from God which exposes us to the one great peril, that of final and complete alienation from God after death, there is some wrong that I must try to help put right. If there is any profound immorality to which we are all committed as a condition of living in society at all, that is a matter of the gravest concern to the Church. I am neither a sociologist nor an economist, and in any case it would be inappropriate, in this context, to produce any formula for setting the world right. It is much more the business of the Church to say what is wrong, that is, what is inconsistent with Christian doctrine, than to propose particular schemes of improvement. What is right enters the realm of the *expedient* and is contingent upon place and time, the degree of culture, the temperament of a people. But the church can say what is always and everywhere *wrong*. And without this firm assurance of first principles which it is the business of the Church to repeat in and out of season, the World will constantly confuse the *right* with the expedient. In a society based on the use of slave labour men tried to prove from the Bible that slavery was something ordained by God. For most people, the actual constitution of society, or that which their more generous passions wish to bring about, is right, and Christianity must be adapted to it. But the Church cannot be, in any political sense, either conservative, or liberal, or revolutionary. Conservatism is too often conservation of the wrong things;

liberalism a relaxation of discipline; revolution a denial of the permanent things.

Perhaps the dominant vice of our time, from the point of view of the Church, will be proved to be Avarice. Surely there is something wrong in our attitude towards money. The acquisitive, rather than the creative and spiritual instincts, are encouraged. The fact that money is always forthcoming for the purpose of making more money, whilst it is so difficult to obtain for purposes of exchange, and for the needs of the most needy, is disturbing to those who are not economists. I am by no means sure that it is right for me to improve my income by investing in the shares of the company, making I know not what, operating perhaps thousands of miles away, and in the control of which I have no effective voice – but which is recommended as a sound investment. I am still less sure of the morality of my being a money-lender: that is, of investing in bonds and debentures. I know that it is wrong for me to speculate: but where the line is to be drawn between speculation and what is called legitimate investment is by no means clear. I seem to be a petty usurer in a world manipulated largely by big usurers. And I know that the Church once condemned these things. And I believe that modern war is chiefly caused by some immorality of competition which is always with us in times of "peace"; and that until this evil is cured, no leagues or disarmaments or collective security or conferences or conventions or treaties will suffice to prevent it.

Any machinery, however beautiful to look at and however wonderful a product of brains and skill, can be used for bad purposes as well as good: and this is as true of social machinery as of constructions of steel. I think that, more important than the invention of a new machine, is the creation of a temper of mind in a people such that they can learn to use a new machine rightly. More important still at the moment would be the diffusion of knowledge of what is wrong – *morally* wrong – and of *why* it is wrong. We are all dissatisfied with the way in which the world is conducted; some believe that it is a misconduct in which we all have some complicity; some believe that if we trust ourselves entirely to politics, sociology or economics we shall only shuffle from one makeshift to another. And here is the perpetual message of the Church: to affirm, to teach and to apply, true theology. We cannot be satisfied to be Christians at our devotions and merely secular reformers all the rest of the week, for there is one question that we need to ask ourselves every day and about whatever business. The

Church has perpetually to answer this question: to what purpose were we born? What is the end of Man?[3]

NOTES

1. Broadcast at 9:20 p.m. on Tuesday, 16 Feb, on the BBC National Programme as the sixth and concluding talk in a series titled "Church, Community and State." TSE's broadcast script is in the BBC Written Archives Centre, Caversham; minor punctuation omissions and frequent reductions of TSE's "World" to lowercase, and capitalization of lowercase "society" in the *Listener* text have been corrected to TSE's text; the BBC inserted subject subtitles in bold between several paragraphs as reading breaks, and these have been deleted. The text of the *Listener* was published, uncorrected and without subtitles, as an Appendix to *The Idea of a Christian Society* (London: Faber & Faber, 1939), 91-99, introduced as having "some relevance to the matter of the preceding pages of this book" [89]. TSE exclaimed in a letter to George Every of 4 Jan that the title of the broadcast, which he agreed to do at the behest of J. H. Oldham, was "not a title of my choosing!"

2. See TSE's "The Literature of Fascism" (1928) (3.540), "Christianity and Communism" (1932) (4.422), and his *Criterion* "Commentary" for Apr 1935 (5.238).

3. After publication in the *Listener*, the text of "The Church's Message to the World," with its editorial subtitles deleted, was incorporated into *Church, Community and State* in the BBC's Recorded Programmes Permanent Library. There the first four paragraphs and the first sentence of the fifth are deleted; the text begins: "The influence of the Church can be exerted in several ways." Thereafter, several words have been inserted or changed in an unidentified hand; before the final question of the broadcast, the following question has been inserted: "For what destination do we die?"

Byron[1*]

The facts of a large part of Byron's life have been well set forth, in the last few years, by Sir Harold Nicolson[2†] and Mr. Quennell, who have also provided interpretations which accord with each other and which make the character of Byron more intelligible to the present generation.[3] No such interpretation has yet been offered in our time for Byron's verse. In and out of universities, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley and Keats have been discussed from various points of view: Byron and Scott have been left in peace. Yet Byron, at least, would seem the most nearly remote[4†] from the sympathies of every living critic: it would be interesting, therefore, if we could have half a dozen essays about him, to see what agreement could be reached. The present article is an attempt to start that ball rolling.

There are several initial difficulties. It is difficult to return critically to a poet whose poetry was – I suppose it was for many of our contemporaries, except those who are too young to have read any of the poetry of that period – the first boyhood enthusiasm. To be told anecdotes of one's own childhood[5†] by an elderly relative is usually tedious; and a return, after many years, to the poetry of Byron is accompanied by a similar gloom: images come before the mind, and the recollection of some verses in the manner of *Don Juan*, tinged with that disillusion and cynicism only possible at the age of sixteen, which appeared in a school periodical.[6] There are more impersonal obstacles to overcome. The bulk of Byron's poetry is distressing, in proportion to its quality; one would suppose that he never destroyed anything. Yet bulk is inevitable in a poet of Byron's type; and the absence of the destructive element in his composition indicates the kind of interest, and the kind of lack of interest, that he took in poetry. We have come to expect poetry to be something very concentrated, something distilled; but if Byron had distilled his verse, there would have been nothing whatever left. When we see exactly what he was doing, we can see that he did it as well as it can be done. With most of his shorter poems, one feels that he was doing something that Tom Moore could do as well or better;[7] in his longer poems, he did something that no one else has ever equalled.

It is sometimes desirable to approach the work of a poet completely out of favour, by an unfamiliar avenue. If my avenue to Byron is a road that

exists only for my own mind, I shall be corrected by other critics: it may at all events upset prejudice and encourage opinion to form itself anew. I therefore suggest considering Byron as a Scottish poet – I say "Scottish," not "Scots," since he wrote in English. The one poet of his time with whom he could be considered to be in competition, a poet of whom he spoke invariably with the highest respect, was Sir Walter Scott.[8†] I have always seen, or imagined that I saw, in busts of the two poets, a certain resemblance in the shape of the head. The comparison does honour to Byron, and when you examine the two faces, there is no further resemblance. Were one a person who liked to have busts about, a bust of Scott would be something one could live with. There is an air of nobility about that head, an air of magnanimity, and of that inner and perhaps unconscious serenity that belongs to great writers who are also great men. But Byron – that pudgy face suggesting a tendency to corpulence, that weakly sensual mouth, that restless triviality of expression, and worst of all that blind look of the self-conscious beauty; the bust of Byron is that of a man who was every inch the touring tragedian. Yet it was by being so thorough-going an actor that Byron arrived at a kind of knowledge: of the world outside, which he had to learn something about in order to play his role in it, and of that part of himself which was his role. Superficial knowledge, of course: but accurate so far as it went.

Of a Scottish quality in Byron's poetry, I shall speak when I come to *Don Juan*. But there is a very important part of the Byronic make-up which may appropriately be mentioned before considering his poetry, for which I think his Scottish antecedence provided the material. That is his peculiar diabolism, his delight in posing as a damned creature – and in providing evidence for his damnation in a rather horrifying way. Now, the diabolism of Byron is very different from anything that the Romantic Agony (as Mr. Praz calls it) produced in Catholic countries.[9] And I do not think it is easily derived from the comfortable compromise between Christianity and paganism arrived at in England and characteristically English. It could come only from the religious background of a people steeped in Calvinistic theology.[10†]

Byron's diabolism, if indeed it deserves the name, was of a mixed type. He shared, to some extent, Shelley's Promethean attitude, and the Romantic passion for Liberty; and this passion, which inspired his more political outbursts, combined with the image of himself as a man of action to bring about the Greek adventure.[11] And his Promethean attitude merges into a Satanic (Miltonic) attitude. The romantic conception of Milton's Satan is

semi-Promethean, and also contemplates Pride as a *virtue*. It would be difficult to say whether Byron was a proud man, or a man who liked to pose as a proud man – the possibility of the two attitudes being combined in the same person does not make them any less dissimilar in the abstract. Byron was certainly a vain man, in quite simple ways:

> I can't complain, whose ancestors are there,
> Erneis, Radulphus – eight-and-forty manors
> (If that my memory doth not greatly err)
> Were their reward for following Billy's banners. . . .[12]

His sense of damnation was also mitigated by a touch of unreality: to a man so occupied with himself and with the figure he was cutting nothing outside could be altogether real. It is therefore impossible to make out of his diabolism anything coherent or rational. He was able to have it both ways, it seems; and to think of himself both as an individual isolated and superior to other men because of his own crimes,[13†] and as a naturally good and generous nature distorted by the crimes committed against it by others. It is this inconsistent creature that turns up as the Giaour, the Corsair, Lara, Manfred and Cain; only as Don Juan does he get nearer to the truth about himself.[14] But in this strange composition of attitudes and beliefs the element that seems to me most real and deep is that of a perversion of the Calvinist faith of his mother's ancestors.[15†]

One reason for the neglect of Byron is, I think, that he has been admired for what are his most ambitious attempts to be poetic; and these attempts turn out, on examination, to be fake: nothing but sonorous affirmations of the commonplace with no depth of significance. A good specimen of such imposture is the well-known stanza at the end of Canto XV of *Don Juan*:

> Between two worlds life hovers like a star,
> 'Twixt night and morn, upon the horizon's verge.
> How little do we know that which we are!
> How less what we may be! The eternal surge
> Of time and tide rolls on, and bears afar
> Our bubbles; as the old burst, new emerge,
> Lash'd from the foam of ages; while the graves
> Of empires heave but like some passing waves. [XV.xcix]

verses which are not too good for the school magazine. Byron's real excellence is on a different level from this.

The qualities of narrative verse which are found in *Don Juan* are no less remarkable in the earlier tales. Before undertaking this essay I had not read these tales since the days of my schoolboy infatuation, and I approached them with apprehension. They are readable. However absurd we find their view of life, they are, as tales, very well told. As a *tale-teller* we must rate Byron very high indeed: I can think of none other than Chaucer who has a greater readability, with the exception of Coleridge whom Byron abused and from whom Byron learned a great deal. And Coleridge never achieved a narrative of such length.[16†] Byron's plots, if they deserve that name, are extremely simple. What makes the tales interesting is first a torrential fluency of verse and a skill in varying it from time to time to avoid monotony; and second a genius for divagation. Digression, indeed, is one of the valuable arts of the story-teller. The effect of Byron's digressions is to keep us interested in the story-teller himself, and through this interest to interest us more in the story. On contemporary readers this interest must have been strong to the point of enchantment; for even still, once we submit ourselves to the point of reading a poem through, the attraction of the personality is powerful. Any few lines, if quoted in almost any company, will probably provide a momentary twitch of merriment:

> Her eye's dark charm 't were vain to tell,
> But gaze on that of the Gazelle,
> It will assist thy fancy well;
> As large, as languishingly dark,
> But Soul beam'd forth in every spark. . . .[17]

but the poem as a whole can keep one's attention. *The Giaour* is a long poem, and the plot is very simple, though not always easy to follow. A Christian, presumably a Greek, has managed, by some means of which we are not told, to scrape acquaintance with a young woman who belonged to the harem, or was perhaps the favourite wife of a Moslem named Hassan. In the endeavour to escape with her Christian lover Leila is recaptured and killed; in due course the Christian with some of his friends ambushes and kills Hassan. We subsequently discover that the story of this vendetta – or part of it – is being told by the Giaour himself to an elderly priest, by way of making his confession. It is a singular kind of confession, because the Giaour seems anything but penitent, and makes quite clear that although he has sinned, it is not really by his own fault. He seems impelled rather by the same motive as the Ancient Mariner, than by any desire for absolution – which

could hardly have been given:[18] but the device has its use in providing a small complication to the story. As I have said, it is not altogether easy to discover what happened. The beginning is a long apostrophe to the vanished glory of Greece, a theme which Byron could vary with great skill. The Giaour makes a dramatic entrance:

> Who thundering comes on blackest steed,
> With slacken'd bit and hoof of speed? [ll. 180-81]

and we are given a glimpse of him through a Moslem eye:[19]

> Though young and pale, that sallow front
> Is scathed by fiery passion's brunt . . . [ll. 194-95]

which is enough to tell us, that the Giaour is an interesting person, because he is Lord Byron himself, perhaps. Then there is a long passage about the desolation of Hassan's house, inhabited only by the spider, the bat, the owl, the wild dog and weeds; we infer that the poet has skipped on to the conclusion of the tale, and that we are to expect the Giaour to kill Hassan – which is of course what happens. Not Joseph Conrad could be more roundabout. Then a bundle is privily dropped into the water, and we suspect it to be the body of Leila. Then follows a reflective passage meditating in succession on Beauty, the Mind, and Remorse. Leila turns up again, alive, for a moment, but this is another dislocation of the order of events. Then we witness the surprise of Hassan and his train – this may have been months or even years after Leila's death – by the Giaour and his banditti, and there is no doubt but that Hassan is killed:

> Fallen Hassan lies – his unclosed eye
> Yet lowering on his enemy. . . . [ll. 669-70]

Then comes a delightful change of metre, as well as a sudden transition, just at the moment when it is needed:

> The browsing camel's bells are tinkling:
> His mother look'd from her lattice high,
> She saw the dews of eve besprinkling
> The pasture green beneath her eye,
> She saw the planets faintly twinkling:
> "'T is twilight – sure his train is nigh." [ll. 689-94]

Then follows a sort of exequy for Hassan, evidently spoken by another Moslem.[20] Now the Giaour reappears, nine years later, in a monastery, as we hear one of the monks answering an inquiry about the visitor's identity.[21] In what capacity the Giaour has attached himself to the monastery is not clear; the monks seem to have accepted him without investigation, and his behaviour among them is very odd; but we are told that he has given the monastery a considerable sum of money for the privilege of staying there.[22] The conclusion of the poem consists of the Giaour's confession to one of the monks.[23] Why a Greek of that period should have been so oppressed with remorse (although wholly impenitent)[24] for killing a Moslem in what he would have considered a fair fight, or why Leila should have been guilty in leaving a husband or master to whom she was presumably united without her consent, are questions that we cannot answer.[25]

I have considered *The Giaour* in some detail in order to exhibit Byron's extraordinary ingenuity in story-telling.[26†] There is nothing straightforward about the telling of the simple tale; we are not told everything that we should like to know; and the behaviour of the protagonists is sometimes as unaccountable as their motives and feelings are confused. Yet the author not only gets away with it, but gets away with it *as narrative*. It is the same gift that Byron was to turn to better account in *Don Juan*; and the first reason why *Don Juan* is still readable is that it has the same narrative quality as the earlier tales.

It is, I think, worth noting, that Byron developed the verse *conte* considerably beyond Moore and Scott, if we are to see his popularity as anything more than public caprice or the attraction of a cleverly exploited personality. These elements enter into it, certainly. But first of all, Byron's verse tales represent a more mature stage of this transient form than Scott's, as Scott's represent a more mature stage than Moore's. Moore's *Lalla Rookh* is a mere sequence of tales joined together by a ponderous prose account of the circumstances of their narration (modelled upon the *Arabian Nights*).[27] Scott perfected a straightforward story with the type of plot which he was to employ in his novels. Byron combined exoticism with actuality, and developed most effectively the use of *suspense*. I think also that the versification of Byron is the ablest: but in this kind of verse it is necessary to read at length if one is to form an impression, and relative merit cannot be shown by quotation. To identify every passage taken at random as being by Byron or by Moore would be connoisseurship beyond my powers; but I

think that anyone who had recently read Byron's tales would agree that the following passage could not be by him:

> And oh! to see the unburied heaps
> On which the lonely moonlight sleeps –
> The very vultures turn away,
> And sicken at so foul a prey!
> Only the fierce hyaena stalks
> Throughout the city's desolate walks
> At midnight, and his carnage plies –
> Woe to the half-dead wretch, who meets
> The glaring of those large blue eyes
> Amid the darkness of the streets![28]

This is from *Lalla Rookh*, and was marked as if with approval by some reader of the London Library.[29]

Childe Harold seems to me inferior to this group of poems (*The Giaour*, *The Bride of Abydos*, *The Corsair*, *Lara*, etc.).[30†] Time and time again, to be sure, Byron awakens fading interest by a purple passage, but Byron's purple passages are never good enough to do the work that is expected of them in *Childe Harold*:

> Stop! for thy tread is on an Empire's dust

is just what is wanted to revive interest, at that point; but the stanza that follows, on the Battle of Waterloo, seems to me quite false; and quite representative of the falsity in which Byron takes refuge whenever he *tries* to write poetry:

> Stop! – for thy tread is on an Empire's dust!
> An Earthquake's spoil is sepulchred below!
> Is the spot mark'd with no colossal bust?
> Nor column trophied for triumphal show?
> None; but the moral's truth tells simpler so,
> As the ground was before, thus let it be; –
> How that red rain hath made the harvest grow!
> And is this all the world has gained by thee,
> Thou first and last of fields! king-making Victory? [III.xvii]

It is all the more difficult, in a period which has rather lost the appreciation of the kind of virtues to be found in Byron's poetry, to analyse

accurately his faults and vices.[31†] Hence we fail to give credit to Byron for the instinctive art by which, in a poem like *Childe Harold*, and still more efficiently in *Beppo* or *Don Juan*, he avoids monotony by a dexterous turn from one subject to another.[32] He has the cardinal virtue of being never dull. But, when we have admitted the existence of forgotten virtues, we still recognize a falsity in most of those passages which were formerly most admired. To what is this falsity due?

Whatever it is, in Byron's poetry, that is "wrong," we should be mistaken in calling it rhetoric.[33†] Too many things have been collected under that name; and if we are going to think that we have accounted for Byron's verse by calling it "rhetorical," then we are bound to avoid using that adjective about Milton and Dryden, about both of whom (in their very different kinds) we seem to be saying something that has meaning, when we speak of their "rhetoric." Their failures, when they fail, are of a higher kind than Byron's success, when he succeeds. Each had a strongly individual idiom, and a sense of language; at their worst, they have an interest in the *word*. You can recognize them in the single line, and can say: here is a particular way of using the language. There is no such individuality in the line of Byron.[34] If one looks at the few single lines, from the Waterloo passage in *Childe Harold*, which may pass for "familiar quotations," you cannot say that any of them is great poetry:

> And all went merry as a marriage-bell . . . [III.xxi]
> On with the dance! let joy be unconfined. . . . [III.xxii]

Of Byron one can say, as of no other English poet of his eminence, that he added nothing to the language, that he discovered nothing in the sounds, and developed nothing in the meaning, of individual words. I cannot think of any other poet of his distinction who might so easily have been an accomplished foreigner writing English. The ordinary person talks[35†] English, but only a few people in every generation can write it; and upon this undeliberate collaboration between a great many people talking a living language and a very few people writing it, the continuance and maintenance of a language depends. Just as an artisan who can talk English beautifully while about his work or in a public bar, may compose a letter painfully written in a dead language bearing some resemblance to a newspaper leader, and decorated with words like "maelstrom" and "pandemonium": so does Byron write a dead or dying language.

This imperceptiveness of Byron to the English word – so that he has to use a great many words before we become aware of him – indicates for

practical purposes a defective sensibility. I say "for practical purposes" because I am concerned with the sensibility in his poetry, not with his private life; for if a writer has not the language in which to express feelings they might as well not exist. We do not even need to compare his account of Waterloo with that of Stendhal to feel the lack of minute particulars;[36] but it is worth remarking that the prose sensibility of Stendhal, being sensibility, has some values[37†] of poetry that Byron completely misses. Byron did for the language very much what the leader writers of our journals are doing day by day. I think that this failure is much more important than the platitude of his intermittent philosophizing. Every poet has uttered platitudes, every poet has said things that have been said before. It is not the weakness of the ideas, but the schoolboy command of the language, that makes his lines seem trite and his thought shallow:

Mais que Hugo aussi était dans tout ce peuple.[38] The words of Péguy have kept drifting through my mind while I have been thinking of Byron:

> Non pas vers qui chantent dans la mémoire, mais vers qui dans la mémoire sonnent et retentissent comme une fanfare, vibrants, trépidants, sonnant comme une fanfare, sonnant comme une charge, tambour éternel, et qui battra dans les mémoires françaises longtemps après que les réglementaires tambours auront cessé de battre au front des régiments.[39]

But Byron was not "in *this* people," either of London or of England, but in his mother's people, and the most stirring stanza of his Waterloo is this:[40†]

> And wild and high the "Cameron's gathering" rose!
> The war-note of Lochiel, which Albyn's hills
> Have heard and heard too, have her Saxon foes: –
> How in the noon of night that pibroch thrills,
> Savage and shrill! But with the breath which fills
> Their mountain-pipe, so fill the mountaineers
> With the fierce native daring which instils
> The stirring memory of a thousand years,
> And Evan's, Donald's fame rings in each clansman's ears![41]

All things worked together to make *Don Juan* the greatest of Byron's poems. The stanza that he borrowed from the Italian was admirably suited to enhance his merits and conceal his defects, just as on a horse or in the

water he was more at ease than on foot.[42] His ear was imperfect, and capable only of crude effects; and in this easy-going stanza, with its habitually feminine and occasionally triple endings, he seems always to be reminding us that he is not really trying very hard and yet producing something as good or better than that of the solemn poets who take their verse-making more seriously. And Byron really is at his best when he is not trying too hard to be poetic; when he tries to be poetic in a few lines he produces things like the stanza I have already quoted, beginning:

Between two worlds life hovers like a star.

But at a lower intensity he gets a surprising range of effect. His genius for digression, for wandering away from his subject (usually to talk about himself) and suddenly returning to it, is, in *Don Juan*, at the height of its power. The continual banter and mockery, which his stanza and his Italian model serve to keep constantly in his mind, serve as an admirable antacid to the highfalutin which in the earlier romances tends to upset the reader's stomach; and his social satire helps to keep him to the objective and has a sincerity that is at least plausible if not profound. The portrait of himself comes much nearer to honesty than any that appears in his earlier work. This is worth examining in some detail.

Charles Du Bos, in his admirable *Byron et le besoin de la fatalité*, quotes a long passage of self-portraiture from *Lara*.[43] Du Bos deserves full credit for recognizing its importance; and Byron deserves all the credit that Du Bos gives him for having written it. This passage strikes me also as a masterpiece of self-analysis, but of a self that is largely a deliberate fabrication – a fabrication that is only completed in the actual writing of the lines. The reason why Byron understood this self so well, is that it is largely his own invention; and it is only the self that he invented that he understood perfectly. If I am correct, one cannot help feeling pity and horror at the spectacle of a man devoting such gigantic energy and persistence to such a useless and petty purpose: though at the same time we must feel sympathy and humility in reflecting that it is a vice to which most of us are addicted in a fitful and less persevering way;[44†] that is to say, Byron made a vocation out of what for most of us is an irregular weakness, and deserves a certain sad admiration for his degree of success. But in *Don Juan*, we get something much nearer to genuine self-revelation. For Juan, in spite of the brilliant qualities with which Byron invests him – so that he may hold his own among the English aristocracy – is not an heroic figure. There is nothing

absurd about his presence of mind and courage during the shipwreck, or about his prowess in the Turkish wars: he exhibits a kind of physical courage and capacity for heroism which we are quite willing to attribute to Byron himself. But in the accounts of his relations with women, he is not made to appear heroic or even dignified; and these impress us as having an ingredient of the genuine as well as of the make-believe.

It is noticeable – and this confirms, I think, the view of Byron held by Mr. Peter Quennell – that in these love-episodes Juan always takes the passive role.[45] Even Haidée, in spite of the innocence and ignorance of that child of nature, appears rather as the seducer than the seduced.[46] This episode is the longest and most carefully elaborate of all the amorous passages, and I think it deserves pretty high marks. It is true that after Juan's earlier initiation by Donna Julia, we are hardly so credulous as to believe in the innocence attributed to him with Haidée; but this should not lead us to dismiss the description as false. The *innocence* of Juan is merely a substitute for the *passivity* of Byron; and if we restore the latter we can recognize in the account some authentic understanding of the human heart, and accept such lines as

> Alas! they were so young, so beautiful,
> So lonely, loving, helpless, and the hour
> Was that in which the heart is always full,
> And, having o'er itself no further power,
> Prompts deeds eternity can not annul. . . . [II.cxcii]

The lover of Donna Julia and of Haidée is just the man, we feel, to become subsequently the favourite of Catherine the Great – to introduce whom, one suspects, Byron had prepared himself by his eight months with the Countess of Oxford.[47] And there remains, if not innocence, that strange passivity that has a curious resemblance to innocence.

Between the first and the second part of the poem, between Juan's adventures abroad and his adventures in England, there is a noticeable difference. In the first part the satire is incidental; the action is picaresque, and of the best kind. Byron's invention never fails. The shipwreck, an episode too well-known to quote, is something quite new and quite successful, even if it be somewhat overdone by the act of cannibalism in which it culminates.[48] The last wild adventure occurs directly after Juan's arrival in England, when he is held up by footpads on the way to London; and here

again, I think, in the obituary of the dead highwayman, is something new in English verse:

He from the world had cut off a great man,
  Who in his time had made heroic bustle.
Who in a row like Tom could lead the van,
  Booze in the ken, or at the spellken hustle?
Who queer a flat? Who (spite of Bow-street's ban)
  On the high toby-spice so flash the muzzle?
Who on a lark, with black-eyed Sal (his blowing),
So prime, so swell, so nutty, and so knowing? [XI.xix]

That is first-rate. It is not a bit like Crabbe, but it is rather suggestive of Burns.

The last four cantos are, unless I am greatly mistaken, the most substantial of the poem. To satirize humanity in general requires either a more genial talent than Byron's, such as that of Rabelais, or else a more profoundly tortured one, such as Swift's. But in the latter part of *Don Juan* Byron is concerned with an English scene, in which there was for him nothing romantic left; he is concerned with a restricted field that he had known well, and for the satirizing of which an acute animosity[49†] sharpened his powers of observation. His understanding may remain superficial, but it is precise. Quite possibly he undertook something that he would have been unable to carry to a successful conclusion; possibly there was needed, to complete the story of that monstrous house-party, some high spirits, some capacity for laughter, with which Byron was not endowed. He might have found it impossible to deal with that remarkable personage Aurora Raby, the most serious character of his invention, within the frame of his satire.[50] Having invented a character too serious, in a way too real for the world he knew, he might have been compelled to reduce her to the size of one of his ordinary romantic heroines. But Lord Henry and Lady Adeline Amundeville are persons exactly on the level of Byron's capacity for understanding; and they have a reality for which their author has perhaps not received due credit.[51]

What puts the last cantos of *Don Juan* at the head of Byron's works is, I think, that the subject matter gave him at last an adequate object for a genuine emotion. The emotion is hatred of hypocrisy; and if it was reinforced by more personal and petty feelings, the feelings of the man who as a boy

had known the humiliation of shabby lodgings with an eccentric mother, who at fifteen had been clumsy and unattractive and unable to dance with Mary Chaworth, who remained oddly alien among the society that he knew so well – this mixture of the origin of his attitude towards English society only gives it greater intensity.[52] And the hypocrisy of the world that he satirized was at the opposite extreme from his own. Hypocrite, indeed, except in the original sense of the word, is hardly the term for Byron. He was an actor who devoted immense trouble to *becoming* a role that he adopted; his superficiality was something that he created for himself. It is difficult, in considering Byron's poetry, not to be drawn into an analysis of the man: but much more attention has already been devoted to the man than to the poetry, and I prefer, within the limits of such an essay as this, to keep the latter in the foreground. My point is that Byron's satire upon English society, in the latter part of *Don Juan*, is something for which I can find no parallel in English literature. He was right in making the hero of his house-party a Spaniard, for what Byron[53†] understands and dislikes about English society is very much what an intelligent foreigner in the same position would understand and dislike.

One cannot leave *Don Juan* without calling attention to another part of it which emphasizes the difference between this poem and any other satire in English: the Dedicatory Verses. The Dedication to Southey seems to me one of the most exhilarating pieces of abuse in the language:

> Bob Southey! You're a poet – Poet-laureate,
> And representative of all the race,
> Although 't is true that you turn'd out a Tory at
> Last, – yours has lately been a common case, –
> And now, my Epic Renegade! what are ye at? . . . [i]

kept up without remission to the end of seventeen stanzas. This is not the satire of Dryden, still less of Pope; it is perhaps more like Hall or Marston, but they are bunglers in comparison. This is not indeed English satire at all; it is really a *flyting*, and closer in feeling and intention to the satire of Dunbar:[54]

> Lene larbar, loungeour, baith lowsy in lisk and lonye;
> Fy! skolderit skyn, thow art bot skyre and skrumple;
> For he that rostit Lawarance had thy grunye,
> And he that hid Sanct Johnis ene with ane womple,

And he that dang Sanct Augustine with ane rumple,
Thy fowll front had, and he that Bartilmo flaid;
The gallowis gaipis eftir thy graceles gruntill,
As thow wald for ane haggeis, hungry gled.[55]

To some this parallel may seem questionable, but to me it has brought a keener enjoyment, and I think a juster appreciation of Byron than I had before. I do not pretend that Byron is Villon (nor, for other reasons, does Dunbar or Burns equal the French poet), but I have come to find in him certain qualities, besides his abundance, that are too uncommon in English poetry, as well as the absence of some vices that are too common. And his own vices seem to have twin virtues that closely resemble them. With his charlatanism, he has also an unusual frankness; with his pose, he is also a *poète contumace* in a solemn country;[56] with his humbug and self-deception he has also a reckless raffish honesty; he is at once a vulgar patrician and a dignified toss-pot; with all his bogus diabolism and his vanity of pretending to disreputability, he is genuinely superstitious and disreputable. I am speaking of the qualities and defects visible in his work, and important in estimating his work: not of the private life, with which I am not concerned.[57]

NOTES

1*. TSE's note: "Contributed to *From Anne to Victoria*, a collection of essays edited by Bonamy Dobrée. Published by Cassell & Co., 1937." The essay's original title was "Byron (1788-1824)"; as printed in *OPP*.

On 24 Mar 1936, TSE wrote to Dobrée: "You will be glad to hear that I have been hard at work on my Byron essay for you, and that it promises to be a fairly long essay according to my standards. I am actually enjoying it much more than the Milton for Herbert [Read]. One does not have to think quite as hard about Byron, and I am getting some fun out of it. I propose to treat Byron as a Scotch rather than an English poet. This point of view, even if wrong, is, I think, a new one."

After he had finished the essay, but before it had appeared in print, TSE was reviewing in draft Auden's "Letter to Lord Byron," which would eventually be published by Faber in *Letters from Iceland* (1937). On 14 Dec 1936, TSE wrote to Dobrée in frustration at the delay in publication: "So for any sake get the book OUT and pay me after it has paid expenses which it never will but pay John Hayward first. Even as it is people will say Auden put me up to writing about Byron." As the volume finally neared publication, Desmond Flower, a director at Cassell & Co., wrote to TSE on 4 Jan 1937, asking if he would donate his original manuscript of the essay. TSE responded on 18 Jan: "There was never any manuscript of my contribution, because I do all of my work, beyond the making of notes which are immediately destroyed, on the typewriter. There was therefore only the typescript from which the essay was set up, and this I have destroyed, conceiving it to be of no value."

TSE published W. P. Ker's essay, "Byron: An Oxford Lecture" in the Oct 1923 *Criterion* ([1]-15).

2†. In *From Anne to Victoria* [hereafter *FAV*]: Mr. Nicolson

3. Sir Harold George Nicolson (1886-1968), diplomat, essayist, novelist, and author of *Byron: The Last Journey* (London: Constable, 1924); he was the husband of Vita Sackville-West. Peter Quennell's *Byron* (Great Lives Series, London: Duckworth, 1934) was the first of several volumes that he edited or wrote on the poet.

4†. In *FAV*: most nearly equally remote

5†. In *FAV*: one's childhood

6. In Feb 1905, when he was sixteen years old, TSE published "A Fable for Feasters" (*CPP* 587-89 / *Poems1* 224-27) in his school's literary magazine, *Smith Academy Record*. There he used ottava rima, popularized by Byron in *Don Juan*.

In his introductory Norton lecture at Harvard, TSE described his juvenile enthusiasms: "I took the usual adolescent course with Byron, Shelley, Keats, Rossetti, Swinburne" (4.592).

7. Thomas Moore, author of *Lalla Rookh* (1817), and many popular ballads and patriotic songs.

8†. In *FAV*: "Scottish," not "Scots," as a reminder that he wrote in English. The one poet of his time with whom he could be considered to be in competition, and one of whom he spoke invariably with the highest respect, was Sir Walter Scott. Possibly Byron, who must have thought of himself as an English poet, was the more Scotch of the two because of being unconscious of his true nationality. I have always seen,

In his fifth Norton lecture, "Shelley and Keats," TSE briefly compared Byron and Scott (4.641 and 644).

9. Mario Praz's *The Romantic Agony* was published in 1933, a translation from the Italian of his *La carne, la morte e il diavolo nella letteratura romantica* (1930).

10†. In *FAV*: And I do not think it is easily derived from the comfortable compromise between Christianity and paganism current in England and characteristically English. It could come only from the religious background provided by a nation which had been ruined by religion. It was a monstrosity, of course, for Scotland to bring forth; but it could come only from a people who took religion more seriously than the English.

TSE addressed the "desire for a devil to worship" in Milton and Byron in "Niccolò Machiavelli" (3.117).

11. In 1823, Byron left Italy to fight for Greek independence against the Ottoman Empire. He died the following year of a fever in Missolonghi and is widely regarded as a hero by Greeks.

12. *Don Juan*, X.xxxvi. *The Complete Works of Lord Byron*, ed. Sir Walter Scott et al. (Paris: Baudry's, 1835). This edition, or a later printing of it, is the closest source for TSE's quotations from Byron.

13†. In *FAV*: because of his innate daring evil,

14. Titular characters of Byron's long poems and dramas: *The Giaour* (1813), *The Corsair* (1814), *Lara* (1814), *Manfred* (1817), *Cain* (1821), and *Don Juan* (1819-24).

15†. In *FAV*: his Scottish ancestors.

16†. In *FAV*: They are, however, extremely readable. However absurd we find their view of life, they are, as tales, extremely well told. As a *tale-teller* we must rate Byron very high indeed: I can think of none other since Chaucer who has an equal readability, with the exception of

Coleridge whom Byron abused and from whom Byron learned a great deal. And Coleridge never attempted narratives of such length.

17. *The Giaour*, ll. 473-77

18. In Byron's poem, the Giaour enters a Christian monastery and confesses his tale to a priest. In the final stanza, contrary to what TSE seems to claim, the priest does grant absolution: the Giaour is "shrived . . . on his dying day" (l. 1332). TSE's insistence that absolution "could hardly have been given" depends on a distinction he implies between the narrative trope of the confessional and its actual practice. Byron does not specify the denomination or religious order of the monastery, but TSE's explanation of the setting entails a sacramental theology of confession that forbids the priest from granting absolution to penitents who have not expressed remorse for their sins. TSE contrasts this theology of confession, which is decidedly Catholic in origin, with Protestant or Calvinist faiths, which do not acknowledge confession as a sacramental practice.

19. The unidentified narrator of this section says of the Giaour: "I know thee not, I loathe thy race . . . Right well I view and deem thee one / Whom Othman's sons should slay or shun" (ll. 191, 198-99).

20. The exequy for Hassan, followed by a curse aimed at the Giaour, begins "A turban carved in coarsest stone" (l. 723). The gap in time appears to be six years, not nine: "'T is twice three years at summer tide / Since first among our freres he came" (ll. 798-99).

21. Without an explanation of the scene change, a monk is heard asking: "How name ye yon lone Caloyer [monk]?" (l. 787).

22. "Great largess to these walls he brought, / And thus our abbot's favour bought" (ll. 816-17).

23. The Giaour's confession begins, again without explanation of the scene change: "Father! thy days have pass'd in peace" (l. 971).

24. The Giaour says of the man he murdered: "His death sits lightly" (l. 1073). Later, he remarks: "this grief / Looks not to priesthood for relief. / . . . When thou canst bid my Leila live, / Then will I sue thee to forgive" (ll. 1206-07, 1210-11).

25. In his confession, the Giaour describes Leila's love for him: "I grant *my* love imperfect . . . / Then deem it evil, what thou wilt; / But say, oh say, *hers* was not guilt!" (ll. 1141-44).

26†. In *FAV*: extraordinary native ingenuity in story-telling.

In *OPP*: I have considered the Giaour in some detail

27. The Arabic composite of Middle Eastern and Indian folktales, legends, and parables known as *One Thousand and One Nights* was gathered over centuries, achieving its latest form in the sixteenth century. Its common name, *Arabian Nights*, is derived from its first translation into English in 1706 as *The Arabian Nights' Entertainment*. By the end of the eighteenth century, this and other translations had popularized the tales throughout Europe.

28. *Lalla Rookh: An Oriental Romance* (London: Frederick Warne, 1901), 134; *read*: hyena. TSE's source text unidentified.

29. According to the London Library catalogs, four editions of *Lalla Rookh* have been part of the collection: one which is undated, then 1817, 1826, and 1851. The three dated volumes contain no annotations or markings at the passage mentioned by TSE. The undated volume is missing from the London Library; otherwise unidentifiable, it is probably TSE's source text.

30†. In *FAV*: etc.) because of the slightness of the narrative.

Published in 1812, the first two cantos of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* launched Byron into international fame; cantos III and IV were published in 1816 and 1818, respectively. *The Bride of Abydos* was published in 1813.

31†. In *FAV*, the following sentence appears after "faults and vices.": "We abominate the commonplace, we expect profundity – though often satisfied by the appearance without the reality – we are suspicious of anything immediately intelligible, we demand an insurgence of the unconscious, and we are patiently prepared to be bored."

32. The satirical poem *Beppo* appeared in 1818.

33†. In *FAV*: *rhetoric* [in italics]

34. Quennell argues: "[Byron's] genius never crystallised in a single poem. There is little 'pure poetry' in his verse – it has many shocks and surprises for a sensitive ear, since it often descends to vile cacophony – but its effectiveness, like the effectiveness of a good speech, comes from the broad movement of the whole production" (90).

35†. In *FAV*: *talks* [in italics]

36. *La Chartreuse de Parme* (*The Charterhouse of Parma*, 1839) by Stendhal (Marie-Henri Beyle) offers an extensive account of the Battle of Waterloo. TSE discusses the novel in "Beyle and Balzac" (1919) (2.48).

37†. In *FAV*: value

38. *Trans*: "But Hugo was also in all this people." This sentence is not Péguy's own, but appears as an editorial heading of an excerpt from Péguy's *Notre Patrie*, a paragraph of which TSE cites below (*Œuvres choisies de Charles Péguy, 1900-1910,* ed. Bernard Grasset, 255); Grasset's "Table des matières," where this phrase also appears, is reprinted in *Œuvres en prose de Charles Péguy, 1909-1914,* ed. Marcel Péguy (Paris: Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, 1961), 865.

39. *Trans*: "Not just verses that sing in the memory, but verses that ring and resound in the memory like a fanfare, vibrant, agitated, sounding like a flourish, sounding like a charge, an eternal drum, and that will beat in French memories long after the regulation drums have stopped beating at the front of the regiments."

Péguy's *Notre Patrie* is the original source of the paragraph; it originally appeared in *Cahiers de la quinzaine*, 22 Oct 1905 (reprinted in *Œuvres en prose complètes*, vol 2, Paris: Gallimard, 1988), 31. TSE's direct source for *Notre Patrie* was probably Bernard Grasset's edition of *Œuvres choisies de Charles Péguy*, which he placed on the reading list for his 1916 course on Modern French Literature (1.475). TSE's library contains two copies of Grasset's *Œuvres choisies de Charles Péguy, 1900-1910*, a second and a fourth edition, both inscribed with TSE's signature. The fourth edition is the more heavily marked; the long passage quoted in "Byron" is marked in this copy.

40†. In *FAV*: But Byron was not "in this people," either of London or of England, and the most stirring stanza of his Waterloo is this:

41. *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, III.xxvi. Although a number of Scottish fighters and brigades fought successfully at Waterloo, Byron's stanza depicts the mustering of a particular Scottish regiment – the 79th Cameron Highlanders – the night before their engagement in battle with Napoleon's forces. "Cameron's gathering" refers to a Highland bagpipe tune or pibroch ("piobaireachd" in Gaelic) used at mustering or during battle, here Byron's "war-note of Lochiel." Regardless of their individual ancestry, all of the Scottish Cameron Highlanders who defeated Napoleon would have seen themselves as sharing in the heroic war history represented by

"Evan's, Donald's fame": Sir Evan (or Ewen) Cameron (1629-1719) fought Cromwell's forces in 1658; his grandson, Donald Cameron of Lochiel (1695-1748), known as "gentle Lochiel," was also a military leader.

42. In a deleted opening passage to his essay on Tennyson, TSE described Byron's use of the Italian stanza: "Even Byron fares better [than Tennyson]: Byron survives not by the poems which pleased his generation, but by the poems in the Italian stanza which he wrote in order to displease it" (5.331 n.2).

43. Du Bos's *Byron et le besoin de la fatalité* (Paris: Au Sans Pareil, 1929; trans. by Ethel Colburn Mayne as *Byron and the Need of Fatality*, London: Putnam, 1932) was reviewed by Robert Sencourt in the *Criterion* of Oct 1929 (122-27). At the beginning of the third chapter, du Bos reproduces stanzas xvii-xix from Canto I of *Lara*. There the protagonist, Count Lara, is described: "In him inexplicably mixed appeared / Much to be loved and hated, sought and feared; / Opinion varying o'er his hidden lot, / In praise or railing ne'er his name forgot" (du Bos/Mayne 52). Du Bos comments: "These three stanzas from Canto I of *Lara* belong, in my opinion, to a very rare order of achievement – that of a *full-length portrait of a human being's subterranean self*; a subject-picture with a background as tempestuous, as fuliginous as some of Tintoret's, treated with the imperturbable ease of a Velasquez. . . . Here Byron has said the final word about himself; and though these *Lara* stanzas splendidly give the lie to the distinction I drew on an earlier page between the genius for expression and the introspective genius, I am too deeply indebted to them not to rejoice in being thus confuted. Still, even here I am inclined to attribute the feat less to introspective genius, properly so called, than to the most magnificent eruption that ever burst from the heart of the Byronic volcano" (du Bos/Mayne 54-55). Du Bos circles in on one line of Byron's – "His Madness was not of the head, but heart" – arguing "the head in this case is the sanest, the soundest of heads: its lucidity, indeed its equilibrium, of judgment was never impaired, not even amid the cloud-wrack that Byron conjured, piled up, insistently wrapped round himself" (55).

On 16 Aug 1937, TSE wrote to his brother, sending his "most valuable books" for deposit at Eliot House at Harvard. Of the nine books sent in the first parcel, one was "*Byron* by Charles du Bos, inscribed to me."

44†. In *FAV*: vice that we most of us are addicted to in a fitful and less persevering way;

45. Quennell's biography describes not the protagonist of *Don Juan* thus, but Byron himself as the one who was "generally the pursued" (48): "[Countess Guiccioli] had attached herself to Byron with the coils of sentiment. In many ways, he was an easy-going man; he had paid court to the Countess in a Venetian salon, and when the lady took his courtship *au grand sérieux* and insisted that he should become her titular lover, with all the constancy and fine feeling that the rôle implied, he had groaned but submitted to the yoke. Once again, a woman had made him her victim; 'I should like to know,' he wailed to his friend Hoppner, '*who* has been carried off – except poor dear *me*. I have been more ravished myself than anybody since the Trojan war'" (103-04).

46. Canto II contains the episode of Haidée, the seventeen-year-old daughter of a pirate. She falls in love with Juan, even though they do not speak the same language.

47. Jane Harley – Countess of Oxford (1774-1824) and wife of Edward Harley, 5th Earl of Oxford and Earl Mortimer – was Byron's lover after his affair with Lady Caroline Lamb. Cantos IX-X of *Don Juan* are set in the court of Catherine the Great.

48. The shipwreck and cannibalism scene take up the first part of Canto II.

49†. In *FAV*: acute personal animosity

50. A rich, noble orphan of Catholic descent and raised by kind guardians, Aurora Raby first appears in XV.xliii of *Don Juan*. Described as sublime, beautiful, lonely, and strong, she says and does little in the narrative.

51. In the final, English cantos of *Don Juan*, Lord Henry Amundeville and his beautiful wife, Lady Adeline, host Juan and other characters at their mansion.

52. Quennell's *Byron* sets out these early biographical details in its first chapter.

53†. In *FAV*: what he understands

54. TSE discussed William Dunbar's *The Flyting of Dunbar and Kennedie* in his English 26 course at Harvard (4.782-83, nn. 105, 110). A flyting (from the Old English verb meaning "to contend in words, chide") is a contest in which two people insult each other in virtuosic, improvised verse. Published in the early sixteenth century, *The Flyting of Dunbar and Kennedie* is the earliest extant composition in this genre.

55. *The Poems of William Dunbar*, ed. W. Mackay Mackenzie (London: Faber and Faber, 1932), 9 (ll. 121-28). *Trans*: Lean impotent, lounger, both loose in groin and loin; / Fie! scorched skin, you are but tumor and wrinkle; / For he that roasted Lawrence had your snout, / And he that hid Saint John's eyes with a wimple, / And he that beat Saint Augustine with a fish tail, / Your foul front had, and he that flayed Bartholomew; / The gallows gapes after your graceless face, / As you would for a haggis, hungry belly.

In his heavily marked edition of Mackenzie's *The Poems of William Dunbar* (Edinburgh: Porpoise Press, 1932, using the same plates as the Faber edition), TSE has underlined "grunye" and "gruntill," translating both as "snout."

56. Tristan Corbière's poem, "Le Poète contumace," describes the poet as a lonely misfit.

Of Byron's "pose," TSE writes in his eighth Clark lecture (1926): "The rebirth of Good and Evil in the nineteenth century is often abortive and never led to a full growth. Its ancestry is mixed, but by an odd accident, Byron (I believe) had something to do with it. With Byron, if you like, everything was pose, but the existence of a pose implies the possibility of a reality to which the pose pretends. One of the constant by-products of this revival of morality is Satanism; but even Satanism – the cultivation of Evil – in any of its curious forms, in part of Baudelaire, in Barbey d'Aurevilly, in Huysmans, in Wilde's *Pen, Pencil and Poison* – is a derivative or an imitation of spiritual life" (2.742).

57. In "Donne in our Time" (1931), TSE compares critical interest in Donne's personality to that of Byron's: "[Donne's] sermons will disappear as suddenly as they have appeared. For one age or another his personality may be no more interesting than has been, for the last seventy-five years or so . . . the personality of Byron" (4.378).

Mr. Reckitt, Mr. Tomlin, and the Crisis

The New English Weekly, 10 (25 Feb 1937) 391-93

In complying, somewhat unwillingly, with the Editor's request that I should contribute to this discussion, I should like to begin by being no less complimentary to Mr. Reckitt and Mr. Tomlin than they have been to each other.[1] I think too highly of their abilities, and of the value of their opinions, to hope that I can compose their differences. But when two opposed views have been put forward, there is something to be said for attempting to express another which is not quite identical with either.

I can speak, at least, as one who, from what may be either a judicial or a vacillating temper of mind, failed to make up his mind until some time after the "crisis" was over. That was a period in which one was exposed to winds of emotion from every side at once; in which one's feelings might vary several times a day. It does not seem to me that either Mr. Reckitt or Mr. Tomlin has yet quite separated the true issues from the irrelevant. First of all, public opinion, which they both invoke. As I have just reported, my own private opinion fluctuated constantly, so I can hardly be expected to take at their face value the "instinctive reactions" of the people at such a moment. Mr. Tomlin is naturally shocked at the conduct of the organs of information, in giving quite a contrary meaning to the behaviour of a crowd in which he had himself mixed: the fact of having been an eye-witness inflamed his indignation. Such conduct should not surprise anyone who has already felt apprehension about our organs of public information (see Jane Soames: *The English Press*; or George Blake *The Press and the Public*).[2] I think that Mr. Tomlin's indignation led him to attach too much importance to the feelings of the crowd. Where we cannot trust our own feelings, why should we put faith in the collective feeling of people the majority of whom are probably less reflective than ourselves? That the behaviour of any crowd means *something* I do not deny; but it requires interpretation. I suspect that the behaviour of this particular crowd represented a feeling which in many individuals is conscious: a distrust of the present Government, combined with a distrust of the only alternative political party in the House of Commons.[3] This distrust had for some time past reinforced the popular charm which King Edward undoubtedly exerted,

and had led many people who cannot be dismissed as merely constituents of a mob, to look towards him as the only hope of leadership.[4] It was hoped that he might be a model of public life, and that his private life might remain private; and the reaction of a crowd, when these hopes were suddenly dashed, was a natural howl of disappointment and rage, and a state of mind in which people are inclined to blame somebody.

I do not attach any more importance to Mr. Reckitt's counter-evidence (what he produces is pretty feeble) than to Mr. Tomlin's. What neither of them seems to recognise is the possibility of both attitudes being adopted by the same people at different moments, and this, for what my small opportunities of observation are worth, must be allowed for. The attitude of indignation and loyalty to a King against a distrusted Government, may be held by the same man who is the *gouailleur* of the public-house.[5] I think that what may be called the Upper Middle Class – including the more serious part of the "aristocracy" – felt that the change was inevitable. I do not mean the plutocracy, but the best, as well as the disinterestedly narrow-minded and prejudiced elements of Whiggery. I cannot prove this; and I am not defending this class; I only maintain that the people who were shocked are not people to be ignored.

Similarly, I think that in the present perspective we may now come to attach less importance to the behaviour of the newspapers. The behaviour of the Press, at emotional moments, is seldom edifying; and on this occasion one could hardly take satisfaction in the newspapers whatever line they took, whether the righteous and sanctimonious or the demagogic. Some seemed to be fishing in troubled waters. I have not the slightest doubt of the simplicity and innocence of the Bishop of Bradford. His words were altogether admirable. They were given by the Press an application that he never intended. Whether this sudden outburst on the part of the Press was a concert, a "plot," seems to me irrelevant.[6] I am assuming, of course, that Mr. Tomlin and those who share his views are no more possessed of inside information than I am. The Editor of *Blackfriars* (whose January leader, "Catholics and the Crown," is the ablest exposition of the point of view held by Mr. Tomlin that I have seen) appears to believe that there was concerted action. He speaks of the London Press on December 3rd as acting "with a uniformity in diversity that Dr. Goebbels might well envy" and contrasts with it "the obviously spontaneous and unconcerted reaction of the Catholic press."[7] *Blackfriars* is hardly fair, and the spontaneous and unconcerted section of the Catholic Press needs explanation

too. Is the accusation that the secular Press (including the *Church Times*) received its instructions from the Government, directly or circuitously?[8] My point is that in any case, this is merely another red herring over the real issue.

Similarly, with the suggestion that there was some plot engineered by financiers, or the Bank of England; or by Mr. Baldwin and his friends, fearful that the King's opinions and popularity might inconvenience their intentions of strengthening their power. Well, at such a moment, stories of plots breed with amazing rapidity; I do not know whether Mr. Tomlin is aware that there have been in circulation other stories, or canards, of plotters who hoped that King Edward might serve their equally nefarious designs. I assert nothing and I am not in a position to deny anything. But even if any story were true it would merely confuse the real issue.[9]

I would say furthermore, though I dislike saying it, that I do not believe that Mr. Tomlin has any better knowledge than I have, of what King Edward would have tried to do for improving the condition of the people, or righting the wrongs of the distressful areas. It seems to me that Mr. Tomlin does not everywhere keep distinct the notion of power of the Kingship (which I think we should like to see enhanced) and the "patriot King" as an object of personal devotion. So far as the latter goes, and so far as my private feelings go, I could feel more personal devotion to a king who combined with popular virtues some unpopular ones, and who could be as independent of the populace as of the aristocracy and of his ministers. But loyalty to the King is something that we can observe towards any occupant of the Throne: the possibility of personal devotion is not altogether in our command. In any case, this also seems to me irrelevant.

Finally, we must set aside as irrelevant our opinions of the much-criticised words of the Archbishop of Canterbury.[10] I will, however, say (lest I should be thought to be biassed, or committed to a certain opinion) that the words to which exception was taken, seemed to me ill-timed. They seem to me, though justified, injudicious. Especially because the choice which any King makes of his *private* associates does not seem to be a suitable matter for *public* criticism. It will be observed that the Bishop of Bradford confined himself to a censure of the King's *public* negligence of religious observance – a legitimate criticism of the way in which, as King, he was failing to carry out his public duties as Head of the Church. He did not even criticise the King's private indifference to religion. Another reason why the Archbishop's reference may seem unsuitable is that the issue

was not even the King's private life, but his wish to marry, which was a quite different, and strictly *public* matter. (This point has already been noted by others.) And finally, the coincidence of the Archbishop's remark, with the actuality of a Divorce Bill deserving the full force of his invective, was at least unfortunate.[11] And all this is irrelevant.

Now, I may have failed completely to understand Mr. Tomlin's point, but he does not make clear exactly what the crisis was. He asserts that the King had forced upon him an "unreal and distressing dilemma *at least five months before marriage, either morganatic or otherwise, was even a feasible proposition*."[12] But unless we are to believe that Mr. Baldwin was lying like a trooper, it was Baldwin who had the dilemma forced upon him. No blame can attach to King Edward for forcing the issue, but force it he apparently did. Supposing that he had refrained from raising the matter until after the Coronation, and after the decree absolute, and then simply, announced his intention, he could not have been prevented, and I do not see that the Government would have had any ground for resigning. His wife would have become Queen. But if, after that, popular feeling had become so adverse – and not the popular feeling of moment, but that which had time to become confirmed – that he had judged best to abdicate, surely the effect of abdication in 1937 or 1938 would have been a more severe blow to the Kingship than abdication in 1936. In taking the step he did, or "forcing the issue," King Edward is to be commended. It seems probable that, rightly or wrongly, the present House of Commons would have been opposed to passing a measure for a morganatic marriage. That was Mr. Baldwin's affair. But, let us say, why not a morganatic marriage? There are only two questions to answer: why not Mrs. Simpson on the Throne? and alternatively, why not a morganatic marriage?

Blackfriars takes, on the one hand, a sacramental-legalistic position. It affirms that if King Edward was convinced "that it was impossible for him to be a real King without Mrs. Simpson," then "Catholics are the first to recognise that it would not have affected the reality of the royalty, any more than the morality of a Pope affected the reality of the Papacy" [8]. I am quite ready to admit that the morality of a Pope does not affect the reality of the Papacy. But I suggest that the morality of Popes did affect the dignity and importance of the Papacy, and did unfortunately forward the designs of those persons who, for their own ends, wished to bring about what has been called the "Reformation." *Blackfriars* thinks that the legal consequences of December, 1688, have long been forgotten: had James II

been dismissed as an atheist, instead of as a Papist, would *Blackfriars* be so ready to forget them? I should not take issue so violently with *Blackfriars* if it stuck to legalism and the "immemorial hereditary right" which has devolved in such devious ways during the last nine hundred years. But *Blackfriars* recognises that "there was a growing divergence between the position held by the Crown in constitutional law in practice and in popular myth. The position in constitutional law and in practice has been unaffected by the abdication" [10]. It would seem therefore that it is the passage of a "popular myth" which *Blackfriars* regrets. Would this popular myth have endured with Mrs. Simpson on the Throne? King Edward's exploration of the possibility of a morganatic marriage suggests that he himself doubted it.

Would the popular myth have endured a morganatic marriage? It is difficult to predict how much the popular myth will endure. This, at least, would have imposed a new strain on it, as there are no precedents. I cannot but believe that the popular myth owes a good deal of its power to the belief that kings are, like priests, lonely men who have sacrificed their natural lives. What a king sacrifices is not, to be sure, the same as what a priest sacrifices. It may not appear to be so much, because it is possible to be a good King without being a moral man. On the other hand, it is more, because a man can choose to be a priest or not, but a king is chosen by his parents begetting him. It is possible also to be a bad priest but a real priest, for a priest's private character does not invalidate the Sacraments that he celebrates. But it is not possible for a Roman priest to marry. In that there is more involved than the maintenance of a popular myth about priests. It has not heretofore been possible for a king to marry another man's wife. And in that, I submit, there is more involved than a popular myth about kings.

I suggest that the idea of the Kingship is more fundamental, from a *Royalist* point of view, than the idea of a "Patriot King" – a phrase which was given currency by an eighteenth-century writer whose notions about the Kingship were not complicated by religious orthodoxy.[13] I suggest that Mr. Tomlin's conception, like that of some of our Roman friends who hold similar views, might point towards the identification of a Patriot King with a kind of Fascist King – with a conception of the Monarchy in which the hereditary claimant to our allegiance should double the role of *duce* or *Fuehrer*.[14] "When that the poor have cried, Caesar hath wept."[15] It seems to me that Mr. Tomlin and the Dominicans for whom "the visit to South Wales had symbolised the return in England of an older and to us a more

democratic conception of Kingship,"[16] are enjoying the vision of an idealised past and preparing the way for a certainly not democratic future.

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. TSE wrote to George Every on 23 Feb that editor Philip Mairet had been "begging" him to contribute to the Reckitt-Tomlin dispute. Maurice B. Reckitt's article, "Envoi to the Crisis," appeared in the *NEW* of 28 Jan 1937, 307-09; it was followed by E. W. F. Tomlin's "Mr. Reckitt and the Crisis" in the *NEW* of 11 Feb, 351-53; Reckitt replied to Tomlin in a letter to the editor of the *NEW* on 18 Feb, 378-79; these items form the basis of TSE's article on their opposed views of the constitutional "crisis" – King Edward VIII's abdication on 10 Dec 1936 over his determination to marry Mrs. Wallis Simpson, an American socialite twice married and in the midst of her second divorce. "I have taken issue to some extent with Tomlin," TSE wrote to George Every on 23 Feb, "but more importantly with the editor of *Blackfriars*, whose statement I have had to take more seriously." Tomlin and the editor of *Blackfriars* wrote in support of the king, Reckitt in opposition.

2. Jane Soames (1900-88), *The English Press: Newspapers and News*, preface by Hilaire Belloc (London: Stanley Nott, 1936); George Blake (1893-1961), *The Press and the Public* (London: Faber & Faber, 1930), in the Criterion Miscellany series, no. 21. TSE noticed both books in his "Commentary" for Jan 1937 (5.412).

3. Though Tomlin does not quote from or refer to any specific reports of crowd behavior at Buckingham Palace or other venues after the announcement of the abdication, the crowds were initially orderly but increasingly demonstrative. Under the heading "Fascist Procession," the *Times* of 11 Dec reported that the crowd at Buckingham Palace "increased rapidly. They included many Fascists, who shouted for King Edward . . . nearly all of them youths . . . singing and shouting. . . . Others scattered on the pavement hundreds of leaflets – 'Stand by the King is the message of Mosley and the British Union in this Crisis' . . . 'We want Edward,' 'We want the workers' King,' 'We want Baldwin, dead or alive,' and other crude rhymes" (18).

Reckitt and Tomlin were in disagreement about the attitude of the public toward the King and over the newspaper reports of what people were saying in the streets, shops, and crowds. "Mr. Tomlin did a good service in pointing out the misrepresentation of the Press over the attitude of the Buckingham Palace crowd," wrote Reckitt. "But we have not necessarily to draw the deduction that this crowd represented a preponderant public opinion. It would be natural for those who felt strongly that they wanted to keep King Edward in any circumstances to go to the Palace and say so. The vast numbers who felt otherwise had no such rallying-point for vociferation. . . . What the majority really thought . . . must necessarily remain a matter of opinion" (307). The "real issue," Tomlin responded, is that "Mr. Reckitt appears to me to underestimate the strength . . . of a large and convinced body of people (among whom I should wish to be included), who, while both fully admitting that King Edward made grave mistakes, and sternly refusing to condone certain aspects of his conduct, deplore the fact that he should have been compelled to renounce the Throne" (352).

4. During his brief reign, which began in Jan 1936, Edward VIII was distrusted by Stanley Baldwin's Conservative government. Shortly before the crisis, his 18 Nov 1936 visit to the

distressed areas of South Wales provoked disagreement between those who resented Edward's directing the government's agenda and those who approved of his sympathy with the impoverished ("The King and his Ministers," *The Times*, 24 Nov 1936, 15).

5. *gouailleur*: ironic or vulgar joker

6. Alfred Blunt (1879-1957), Bishop of Bradford from 1931 to 1955, gave a speech at his Diocesan Conference on 1 Dec 1936 which became front-page news and heightened public awareness of the dilemma of the still uncrowned King Edward VIII, who abdicated nine days later. While the bishop did not disclose information of Edward's private life, the speech contained veiled insinuations about his position as head of the Church of England, as reported in the *Times* of 2 Dec under the heading "The Coronation Service." The bishop is quoted as saying that the benefit to be derived by the people from the king's coronation would depend in the first instance "on the faith, prayer, and self-dedication of the King himself; and on that it would be improper for me to say anything except to commend him . . . to God's grace, which he will so abundantly need . . . if he is to do his duty faithfully. We hope that he is aware of this need. Some of us wish that he gave more sign of such awareness" (11).

7. *Blackfriars*, 18 (Jan 1937), 7, 8; edited by the Dominican priest Victor White (1902-60), with whom TSE corresponded. In the midst of preparing his article, TSE wrote to George Every on 15 Jan: "By the way, with reference to Tomlin's article, have you seen the January *Blackfriars*? It contains an editorial statement on the subject which I found very much more satisfactory than Tomlin's."

8. The editorial states: "Before the public had recovered its breath, *The Tablet* was out the following morning with a memorable leader on 'The King's Matter' which was as remarkable for its penetration and its independence as for its promptness" (7). "Some may be surprised that the section of the community which is most unyielding on the sanctity and indissolubility of marriage and on the sexual moral code should have reacted as it did. Our very friendly contemporary, *The Church Times*, saw in the attitude of *The Tablet* 'one more striking example of the Roman Catholic opposition to democracy.' Nothing could be more untrue. What the 'crisis' has made abundantly clear is that the real power which governs us is neither royal nor democratic; let alone, as many of us would wish it, both. The whole business was staged and arranged without any reference to the people, or even to their alleged representatives in the English and Dominion parliaments. The ex-King was not permitted, on 'constitutional' grounds, to present his own case to the people so long as he was King" (8-9).

9. A recent book by the Rev. Robert Beaken, *Cosmo Lang: Archbishop in War and Crisis* (2012), based on discoveries in the Lambeth Palace archives, reveals that Archbishop Lang betrayed King Edward VIII and orchestrated the abdication crisis in collusion with Prime Minister Baldwin and the editor of the *Times*, Geoffrey Dawson.

10. At a religious service broadcast on 13 Dec, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Cosmo Lang, upholding the sanctity of marriage, criticized the King, claiming that he had "surrendered the trust" that God placed in him to pursue his "craving for private happiness," and accusing him of having "sought his happiness in a manner inconsistent with the Christian principle of marriage" within a social circle "whose standards and ways of life are alien to all the best interests and traditions of his people. Let those who belong to this circle know that today they stand rebuked by the judgement of the nation which had loved King Edward. I have shrunk from saying these words. But I have felt compelled for the sake of sincerity and truth to say them." Quoted in

Compton MacKenzie, *The Windsor Tapestry: Being a Study of the Life, Heritage and Abdication of H. R. H. The Duke of Windsor, K.G.* (London: Rich & Cowan, 1938), 544-45.

11. The "Divorce Bill," renamed the Matrimonial Causes Bill of 1937, from its first named passage in 1857, sought to liberalize the divorce laws by stating that there should be no petition for divorce for three years (instead of the original five years) after marriage. In his testimony in Parliament, recorded in the *Times* of 20 July under the heading "Marriage Bill / Sanctity of Family Life," the Archbishop, who made the question of divorce a prime cause against King Edward VIII, discussed the conflict between the law of the Church, as declared in the Marriage Service, and the law of the State: "Ever since 1857 the State had seen fit to depart from the principles of the Church in this respect. Under the Bill the position would be worsened rather than improved, but it might be . . . impossible for the State to impose Christian principles by law upon a mixed community when many of its members had neither the religious faith nor the assisting grace to enable them to live up to the Christian standard. . . . As a guardian of that standard how could he bring himself to vote actively in favour of a Bill which contained some provisions which seemed to him inconsistent with that standard" (9). The Bill passed by a vote of 79 to 28.

12. "Mr. Reckitt and the Crisis," 342. When Prime Minister Baldwin informed Edward that Mrs. Simpson would not be an acceptable Queen, Edward proposed a morganatic marriage, in which she would not become Queen but would receive a title appropriate to her status. Nor would any of the King's titles and privileges pass to her or to any children born of the marriage. When this proposal proved unacceptable, Edward made the decision to abdicate and marry.

13. In 1738, the Tory politician Henry St. John Bolingbroke, in his long opposition to the Whig Prime Minister Sir Robert Walpole, wrote *The Idea of a Patriot King*, an idealized description of a king (ostensibly Prince Frederick of Wales) whose accession would bring harmony to party-political conflicts between Tories and Whigs: "Nothing can so surely and so effectually restore the virtue and public spirit essential to the preservation of liberty and national prosperity, as the reign of such a prince."

14. Benito Mussolini, *Il Duce* (Leader) of the Fascist Party; Adolf Hitler, *Der Führer* (Leader) of the Nazi Party

15. *Julius Caesar* III.ii.91 (Antony to Citizens)

16. *Blackfriars*, 8

Introduction to *Nightwood*, by Djuna Barnes[1]

New York: Harcourt Brace and Company, 1937. Pp. xiv + 211; Introduction, vii-xiv.[2]

When the question is raised, of writing an introduction to a book of a creative order, I always feel that the few books worth introducing are exactly those which it is an impertinence to introduce. I have already committed two such impertinences;[3] this is the third, and if it is not the last no one will be more surprised than myself. I can justify this preface only in the following way. One is liable to expect other people to see, on their first reading of a book, all that one has come to perceive in the course of a developing intimacy with it. I have read *Nightwood* a number of times, in manuscript, in proof, and after publication. What one can do for other readers – assuming that if you read this preface at all you will read it first – is to trace the more significant phases of one's own appreciation of it. For it took me, with this book, some time to come to an appreciation of its meaning as a whole.[4]

In describing *Nightwood* for the purpose of attracting readers to the English edition, I said that it would "appeal primarily to readers of poetry." This is well enough for the brevity of advertisement but I am glad to take this opportunity to amplify it a little. I do not want to suggest that the distinction of the book is primarily verbal, and still less that the astonishing language covers a vacuity of content. Unless the term "novel" has become too debased to apply, and if it means a book in which living characters are created and shown in significant relationship, this book is a novel. And I do not mean that Miss Barnes's style is "poetic prose." But I do mean that most contemporary novels are not really "written." They obtain what reality they have largely from an accurate rendering of the noises that human beings currently make in their daily simple needs of communication; and what part of a novel is not composed of these noises consists of a prose which is no more alive than that of a competent newspaper writer or government official. A prose that is altogether alive demands something of the reader that the ordinary novel-reader is not prepared to give. To say that *Nightwood* will appeal primarily to readers of poetry does not mean that it is not a novel, but that it is so good a novel that only sensibilities trained on poetry can wholly appreciate it. Miss Barnes's prose has the prose rhythm that is prose style, and the musical pattern which is not that of verse. This

prose rhythm may be more or less complex or elaborate, according to the purposes of the writer; but whether simple or complex, it is what raises the matter to be communicated, to the first intensity.

When I first read the book I found the opening movement rather slow and dragging, until the appearance of the doctor. And throughout the first reading, I was under the impression that it was the doctor alone who gave the book its vitality; and I believed the final chapter to be superfluous. I am now convinced that the final chapter is essential, both dramatically and musically. It was notable, however, that as the other characters, on repeated reading, became alive for me, and while the focus shifted, the figure of the doctor was by no means diminished. On the contrary, he came to take on a different and more profound importance when seen as a constituent of a whole pattern. He ceased to be like the brilliant actor in an otherwise unpersuasively performed play for whose re-entrance one impatiently waits. However in actual life such a character might seem to engross conversation, quench reciprocity, and blanket less voluble people; in the book his role is nothing of the kind. At first we only hear the doctor talking; we do not understand why he talks. Gradually one comes to see that together with his egotism and swagger – Dr. Matthew-Mighty-grain-of-salt-Dante-O'Connor [102] – he has also a desperate disinterestedness and a deep humility. His humility does not often appear so centrally as in the prodigious scene in the empty church, but it is what throughout gives him his helpless power among the helpless. His monologues, brilliant and witty in themselves as they are, are not dictated by an indifference to other human beings, but on the contrary by a hypersensitive awareness of them. When Nora comes to visit him in the night (*Watchman, What of the Night?*)[5] he perceives at once that the only thing he can do for her ("he was extremely put out, having expected someone else" [102]) – the only way to "save the situation" – is to talk torrentially, even though she hardly takes in anything he says, but reverts again and again to her obsession. It is his revulsion against the strain of squeezing himself dry for other people, and getting no sustenance in return, that sends him raving at the end. *The people in my life who have made my life miserable, coming to me to learn of degradation and the night* [201]. But most of the time he is talking to drown the still small wailing and whining of humanity, to make more supportable its shame and less ignoble its misery.

Indeed, such a character as Doctor O'Connor could not be real alone in a gallery of dummies: such a character needs other real, if less conscious,

people in order to realize his own reality. I cannot think of any character in the book who has not gone on living in my mind. Felix and his child are oppressively real. Sometimes in a phrase the characters spring to life so suddenly that one is taken aback, as if one had touched a wax-work figure and discovered that it was a live policeman. The doctor says to Nora, *I was doing well enough until you came and kicked my stone over, and out I came, all moss and eyes* [190]. Robin Vote (the most puzzling of all, because we find her quite real without quite understanding the means by which the author has made her so) is *the vision of an eland coming down an aisle of trees, chapleted with orange blossoms and bridal veil, a hoof raised in the economy of fear* [47]; and later she has *temples like those of young beasts cutting horns, as if they were sleeping eyes* [168]. Sometimes also a situation, which we had already comprehended loosely, is concentrated into a horror of intensity by a phrase, as when Nora suddenly thinks on seeing the doctor in bed, "*God, children know something they can't tell; they like Red Riding Hood and the wolf in bed!*" [101]

The book is not simply a collection of individual portraits; the characters are all knotted together, as people are in real life, by what we may call chance or destiny, rather than by deliberate choice of each other's company: it is the whole pattern that they form, rather than any individual constituent, that is the focus of interest. We come to know them through their effect on each other, and by what they say to each other about the others. And finally, it ought to be superfluous to observe – but perhaps to anyone reading the book for the first time, it is not superfluous – that the book is not a psychopathic study. The miseries that people suffer through their particular abnormalities of temperament are visible on the surface: the deeper design is that of the human misery and bondage which is universal. In normal lives this misery is mostly concealed; often, what is most wretched of all, concealed from the sufferer more effectively than from the observer. The sick man does not know what is wrong with him; he partly wants to know, and mostly wants to conceal the knowledge from himself. In the Puritan morality that I remember, it was tacitly assumed that if one was thrifty, enterprising, intelligent, practical and prudent in not violating social conventions, one ought to have a happy and "successful" life. Failure was due to some weakness or perversity peculiar to the individual; but the decent man need have no nightmares. It is now rather more common to assume that all individual misery is the fault of "society," and is remediable by alterations from without. Fundamentally, the two philosophies, however

different they may appear in operation, are the same. It seems to me that all of us, so far as we attach ourselves to created objects and surrender our wills to temporal ends, are eaten by the same worm. Taken in this way, *Nightwood* appears with profounder significance. To regard this group of people as a horrid sideshow of freaks is not only to miss the point, but to confirm our wills and harden our hearts in an inveterate sin of pride.

I should have considered the foregoing paragraph impertinent, and perhaps too pretentious for a preface meant to be a simple recommendation of a book I greatly admire, were it not that one review (at least), intended in praise of the book, has already appeared which would in effect induce the reader to begin with this mistaken attitude.[6] Otherwise, generally, in trying to anticipate a reader's misdirections, one is in danger of provoking him to some other misunderstanding unforeseen. This is a work of creative imagination, not a philosophical treatise. As I said at the beginning, I am conscious of impertinence in introducing the book at all; and to have read a book a good many times does not necessarily put one in the right knowledge of what to say to those who have not yet read it. What I would leave the reader prepared to find is the great achievement of a style, the beauty of phrasing, the brilliance of wit and characterisation, and a quality of horror and doom very nearly related to that of Elizabethan tragedy.[7]

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. *Nightwood*, by the American novelist, poet, and playwright Djuna Barnes (1892-1982), was preceded by *Ryder* (1928) and *Ladies Almanack* (1928). First published by Faber and Faber in 1936, preceding the American edition, the novel was written in 1932-33 in Hayford Hall, a country manor in Devon, England, rented by Peggy Guggenheim, whose guests included the novelist and poet Emily Coleman. In a letter of 25 Oct 1935, Coleman, who championed the novel, persuaded TSE to read it for Faber after other publishers had rejected it.

2. This first American edition by Harcourt Brace, containing TSE's introduction, was published on 4 Mar 1937. The introduction was not included in the first English edition by Faber in 1936, but its dust jacket contained a blurb composed by TSE: "This book, upon which Miss Barnes has been at work for a long time, is extremely difficult to describe. It is in prose, but will appeal primarily to readers of poetry; it has something of the form of a novel, but the characters suffer rather than act: as with Dostoevski and George Chapman, one feels that the action is hardly more than the shadow-play of something really taking place on another plane of reality. It is concerned with *le misérable au centre de sa misère*, and has nothing to offer to readers whose temperament attaches them to either an easy or a frightened optimism." In the first American edition, instead of the 1936 Faber blurb, Harcourt printed on the inside front flap of the dust jacket these sentences adapted from TSE's introduction: "I have read 'Nightwood' a

number of times, in manuscript, in proof, and after publication. It took me, with this book, some time to come to an appreciation of its meaning as a whole. . . . What I would leave the reader prepared to find, is the great achievement of a style, the beauty of phrasing, the brilliance of wit and characterization, and a quality of horror and doom very nearly related to that of Elizabethan tragedy."

TSE reprinted the introduction from the American edition in the *Criterion* of Apr 1937 (560-64), with a headnote: "(The following note on *Nightwood* was written as an introduction for the first American edition of the book, but it has been suggested to me that it might serve the purpose of a review in this country, and I therefore print it here exactly as it stands)." Though the texts are the same, there are minor punctuation and spelling alterations in the *Criterion* version.

3. Up to this point, TSE had written eight such introductions to creative works – most recently to *Selected Poems* of Marianne Moore (5.230) and *Poems of Tennyson* (5.331) – though it is unclear in this context which two he considered an "impertinence."

4. TSE wrote to Geoffrey Faber about the manuscript of "Nightwood" on 15 Apr 1936: "I have read it over the holidays, and I am more strongly in favour of the book than ever. I am even reconciled to the somewhat slow opening . . . On a second reading, I see the book more as a whole – at first I was impressed by brilliant phrases and passages, and chiefly by the figure of the Doctor: now I see the necessity and rightness of the other characters, and I see the book as bigger than any one character in it. . . . What I feel more strongly after the second reading is the undertone of the book, which gives it unity. This writer is somebody to whom something has happened that happens to very few (because we don't want it): she has caught up with her own sorrow, identified it and tapped it on the shoulder . . . it's a sorrow much deeper than personal vicissitudes, of course, because it is the sorrow of life, the worm unkillable by any of the agents of this world. And as for her style, it has what is for me the authentic evidence of power, in that I find myself having to struggle, directly after reading, not to ape it myself: and very few writers exercise that pull. . . . But what is important to me is that I believe that this may be our last chance to do something remarkable in the way of imaginative literature. . . . Well, if we don't publish this book, I am convinced that we are missing something important: and I shall then go on trying until I can get someone else to publish it."

5. Title of chapter 5 (99), taken from Isaiah 21:11: "The burden of Dumah. He calleth to me out of Seir, Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night?" (KJV).

6. TSE alludes to the first review of the Faber edition in the *TLS* of 17 Oct 1936 by his friend and *Criterion* contributor Orlo Williams. Under the heading "Nightmare of the Soul," Williams states that though the novel "seems to begin as a sober chronicle, it soon takes on its true colour, that of a somber fantasy ending in a ghastly nightmare. It carries upon all its lineaments the symptoms of an indigestion or sickness of the soul so deep and pervasive as to seem irremediable, . . . calling up a grotesque or hideous obverse to what, in mortal pride, we call beautiful – to love especially, to life and even to hope. Yet it is a book that . . . one cannot throw down in impatience, for one is aware of a new author with an unusual and impressive power of expression" (835).

7. The introduction was eventually included in the second Faber edition of *Nightwood* (1950), with TSE's "Note to Second Edition" dated 1949: "In reprinting this book, Faber & Faber have thought fit to include the preface, which thus appears for the first time in an English

edition. As my admiration for the book has not diminished, and my only motive for revision would be to remove or conceal evidences of my own immaturity at the time of writing – a temptation which may present itself to any critic reviewing his own words at a twelve years' distance – I have thought best to leave unaltered a preface which may still, I hope, serve its original purpose of indicating an approach helpful for the new reader. // T. S. E." (8).

The Revenger's Tragedy: A Note by T. S. Eliot[1]

There was a rumour, started by Marcel Schwob, and, I regret to say, given currency by Professor Allardyce Nicoll, to the effect that *Cyril Tourneur naquit de l'union d'un dieu inconnu avec une prostituée*.[2] If, however, we assume that Cyril Tourneur existed, and if he was the author of both of the two plays ascribed to him – and in the seventeenth century poets sometimes did have poetical names, e.g., Aurelian Townshend – then nothing better has been written about Tourneur than Churton Collins's Introduction to his edition of the plays and poems.[3] But I think that what we should do tonight is to forget all theories about the author of *The Revenger's Tragedy* – and all the imaginings of the charnel-vault-and-worms school of Elizabethan criticism – Churton Collins, Swinburne, Vernon Lee[4] – and take advantage of this, the first opportunity in our time, of deciding for ourselves whether *The Revenger's Tragedy* is a good play. I am sure that the author, whoever he was, was a great poet. As a poet, he has always seemed to me very near to two contemporaries: to the Middleton of *Women beware Women* and to the author of that great passage towards the end of *The Witch of Edmonton* (recently and beautifully rendered by Miss Edith Evans) where the witch abuses other kinds of "witch."[5] At least one critic has attributed *The Revenger's Tragedy* to Middleton; and in a play admittedly so composite as *The Witch of Edmonton*, it is possible to make out a case for Middleton's having taken a hand.[6] But the feel of *The Revenger's Tragedy* as a whole is to me different from that of a Middleton play: this is a kind of belief which requires to be tested by a performance of the play itself.

If *The Revenger's Tragedy* is as exciting to hear and see as it is to read, yet it remains a play of its own kind. The author is not, in the usual sense, a "dramatist": he is a poet who had something to say, and whom the circumstances of the time forced to speak dramatically. It seems to me that the circumstances forced him to the stage for his own advantage, and forced him to an objectivity not natural to him. *The Revenger's Tragedy* is not the play of a dramatist, but of a poet forced to take to the stage. The characters of the play are not, by Elizabethan or any other standards (and dramatic standards of reality of characters do not change) real people: their reality is due to the intensity with which the author discharges his own feeling

through them. The play, judged by dramatic standards, should be dull and monotonous, but it is exciting; the characters should be puppets, but they have a galvanic activity. If this play was the work of a contemporary, the modern dramatic critic, who knows all the rules of drama – in prose – and who thinks of verse as a kind of burden for a play to bear – a convention of speech in spite of which a play is sometimes good – would have not a good word for *The Revenger's Tragedy*. But I think that it is evidence that a play may sometimes be a great play because of the poetry and not (as is the usual judgment upon Shakespeare) in spite of it. Your experience in seeing this play must be your test of whether I am right about it.

NOTES

1. As printed in the rare sixteen-page program for the ADC (Amateur Dramatic Society) and Marlowe Society presentation of Cyril Tourneur's *The Revenger's Tragedy* at the ADC Theatre, the playhouse of Cambridge University, 8-13 Mar 1937. TSE's "Note" (6) was commissioned and titled "A Note by T. S. Eliot" by George Rylands, who also commissioned a note by Bonamy Dobrée, "Gangsters at the Globe" (10-11), for the same program. On 1 Feb 1970 Rylands, an English scholar at King's College, Cambridge, and former director of the Marlowe Society, sent to the King's library a copy of the program, TSE's initialed two-page typescript, titled "The Revenger's Tragedy," with his holograph emendations, and Ryland's review of the production in *The Spectator* of 12 Mar 1937, in which he states that "Mr. T. S. Eliot, who knows all there is to know about Jacobean blank verse, bids us give ear to the subtlety and brilliance of the technique" (471). The program, related materials, and correspondence are in the Hayward Bequest (P39b).

The Revenger's Tragedy, printed anonymously in 1606 but attributed to Tourneur by Edward Archer in a play list of 1656, is now widely believed to be the work of Thomas Middleton.

2. Marcel Schwob (1867-1905), French Symbolist writer, journalist, and critic, made this statement as the opening sentence of his "Cyril Tourneur: Poète tragique" in *Vies imaginaires* [*Imaginary Lives*] (Paris: Bibliothèque-Charpentier, 1896), 205; *trans*: "Cyril Tourneur was born out of the union of an unknown god with a prostitute." The English critic Allardyce Nicoll quoted Schwob on the opening page of *The Works of Cyril Tourneur* (London: Fanfrolico Press, 1929). TSE's review of Nicoll's edition forms the text of "Cyril Tourneur" (1930) (4.197).

3. TSE discusses the "pleasing tinkle" of Aurelian Townshend in "The Metaphysical Poets," describing his "Dialogue between a Pilgrim and Time" as "one of the few regrettable omissions from the excellent anthology of Professor Grierson" (2.383). The two-volume edition of *The Plays and Poems of Cyril Tourneur*, edited with a critical introduction and notes by John Churton Collins, was published in 1878 and was the standard edition before that of Nicoll. TSE remarked in "Cyril Tourneur," "how little, in the fifty-two years of Elizabethan research since Collins, has been added to our knowledge of the singular poet with the delightful name. Churton Collins, in his admirable introduction, really knows nothing at all about the man's life; and all that later students have been able to do is to piece together several probable shreds" (4.197).

4. TSE discusses Swinburne's ranking of Tourneur and other Elizabethan dramatists in "Swinburne as Critic" (1919), his review of Swinburne's *Contemporaries of Shakespeare*: "He is certainly right in placing Webster above Tourneur, Tourneur above Ford, Ford above Shirley" (2.117). In his chapter on Tourneur in *The Age of Shakespeare* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1908), Swinburne describes *The Revenger's Tragedy* as "the most perfect and most terrible incarnation of the idea of retribution impersonate and concentrated revenge that ever haunted the dreams of a tragic poet or the vigils of a future tyrannicide" (270). The volume was on the reading list for TSE's 1918 syllabus on Elizabethan Literature (1.757-58).

TSE alludes to the comparison by author and critic Vernon Lee, pseudonym of Violet Paget (1856-1935), of Italian and English dramatists of the Renaissance in her chapter on "The Italy of the Elizabethan Dramatists" in *Euphorion* (1884). Focusing on Tourneur, Marston, Webster, and Ford, she asks: "where in this Italian Renaissance are the horrors which fascinated so strangely our English playwrights: the fratricides and incests, the frightful crimes of lust and blood which haunted and half crazed the genius of Tourneur and Marston? . . . Where in this Renaissance of Italian literature, so cheerful and light of conscience, is the foul and savage Renaissance of English tragedy?" *Euphorion: Being Studies of the Antique and the Mediaeval in the Renaissance* (London: T. Fischer Unwin, 1884), 86.

5. Middleton's *Women Beware Women*, composed ca. 1624-25, with no recorded performances in its era, was first published in 1657. *The Witch of Edmonton*, by Thomas Dekker, John Ford, and William Rowley, first performed on 29 Dec 1621 but not published until 1658, was revived in a London production at the Old Vic on 8 Dec 1936, with the actress Edith Evans (1888-1976) as Mother Sawyer, the witch. The reviewer for the *Times* of 9 Dec praised her for having "the subtlety to discover Dekker's compassion for the witch" (12). In act 4, scene 1, Mother Sawyer, accused before Sir Arthur and the Justice, expands the realm of witches: "Men in gay clothes, / Whose backs are laden with titles and with honours, / Are within far more crookèd than I am, / And, if I be a witch, more witch-like. . . . A witch! who is not? / Hold not that universal name in scorn, then."

6. The Australian Elizabethan scholar E. H. C. Oliphant (1862-1936) attributed the play to Middleton in "The Authorship of *The Revenger's Tragedy*" (*Studies in Philology*, 23 [Apr 1926], 157-68), leading TSE to write in "Cyril Tourneur" that he sided with Nicoll, who, "we think quite rightly, rejects Mr. E. H. C. Oliphant's theory that Middleton is the author" (4.199). Oliphant later wrote in the *TLS* of 18 Dec 1930 in defense of his attribution, expressing admiration for TSE's anonymous review of Nicoll's edition of Tourneur in the same letter, and asking: "But would anyone dream for a moment of connecting the play with Tourneur but for the slight shred of external evidence that exists in his favour?" (1087). The letter prompted a reply from TSE in the *TLS* of 1 Jan 1931: "I submit that the differences between *The Revenger's Tragedy* and the whole of Middleton's work in tragedy are more significant than the differences between the two plays attributed to Tourneur" (4.221-22). Oliphant wrote a rebuttal to TSE's views in "Tourneur and Mr. Eliot" (*Studies in Philology*, 32 [Oct 1935], 546-52).

A Commentary

The Criterion: A Literary Review, 16 (Apr 1937) 469-74

What most strikes me, in reading the selection of *Political and Economic Writings* (Nott: 5s. net) of A. R. Orage, is the liveliness and interest of the passages from *The New Age* dated August, 1912.[1] The bulk of the book consists of selections from his editorial contributions to *The New English Weekly* from 1932 to 1934, and will serve as a useful refresher, and convenient reference. But it deals with issues which are as actual now as they were from five to three years ago, and we re-read it without any feeling of surprise. What does come with a shock of contemporaneity is Orage's criticism in 1912, on the occasion of what now seems as remote as Chartism, or the rebellion of Jack Cade:[2] the Women's Suffrage Movement.

Ordinarily the good journalist suffers, and the bad journalist benefits, by the ephemerality of his writing and the general indifference to what anyone said a fortnight ago. True prophecies and false are alike forgotten; oblivion, ungrateful to some, is generous to others. Those who have been the first to recognize genius, and those who have lavished flattery on fools, meet the same reward. Posterity, capricious in wreathing the tombs of politicians with obloquy or adulation, treats journalists alike. This injustice might in part be remedied if the memory of every journalist important in his own time – and I mean by journalists those who influence opinion by keeping the printing press in perpetual motion – could be preserved by some judicious selection from his daily or weekly writings. Few would endure this test as well as Orage. Think of Mr. Shaw and Mr. Wells: of whom Orage said in 1912 that he hoped "that they may both live long enough to see themselves derided and their accursed doctrines numbered among the fads of the early twentieth century" [49]. And there are always others, on that fringe of journalism proper, in the intellectual twilight of which most popular "serious" reading matter is prepared, who should be condemned after death to the penance of the florilegium: the Trevelyan-historians, the Laski-sociologists, the Stamp-economists.[3] But bad poets should be left in peace.

Orage's remarks on Women's Suffrage in 1912 are as well worth reading after twenty-five years as they were at the time. They are as defiant of public opinion now as they were then. They are very well worth reading in

connexion with a problem of which, it is obvious, we shall hear more: the decline of the birth-rate. I do not think that anything in the statistics – *The Times* newspaper is evidently determined to keep the matter before our eyes – would have astonished Orage in 1912.[4] They follow very naturally from the change in the position of women that was then his concern. But what is interesting at the moment is to ask why this declining birth-rate – we have heard for some time that it is declining – should be suddenly put forward in such a way as to suggest that it is a cause for alarm. *Why* are people alarmed? It is not so very long ago that I heard a man whose name I have forgotten – he was described to me as a knight and an economist, but he was not one of the well-known economic knights – declare at a meeting that the decline in the birthrate was something to be welcomed, considering that there were so many unemployed. If it is now a cause of anxiety, we need not presume a sudden desire that there should be more souls to glorify God and enjoy him forever,[5] or even an admission that there is something to be said for families. There is probably some connexion with the present anxiety about the "fitness" of the nation, and the desire to supply gymnasiums and playing-fields. The first cause is likely to be military: the insufficiency, and the physical inferiority, of applicants for the army. And the second cause is likely to be economic: an eventual deficiency of consumers, of the goods that we can produce and of the goods that other nations produce to pay for what they buy from us.

The great danger of any alarm about depopulation is, that instead of trying simply to remove obstacles, so that the natural desire of people to have children may be satisfied, we shall get an artificial encouragement of population: subsidies for maternity, prizes for large families, etc. To breed children will be a service to the state, like cultivating allotments. And the ideal will be a planned population, with bonuses for children when there are not enough, and penalties when there are too many. This kind of regulation is to be condemned both because of the wrongness of its motives, and because it represents an evasion of economic and of moral problems which concern the very structure of our society.

We are informed, perhaps to comfort us a little, that Sweden – which we had come to believe to be a relatively prosperous and contented country in which almost nobody had either too much money or too little – is suffering from the same ailment. But it is said that in Stockholm people prefer small flats with marble bathrooms and electric refrigerators to having families, whereas in the country the birth-rate is kept down by the harder fact

that under-nourishment increases with the size of the family.[6] It is likely that too much importance is attached to the modern craving for luxury, comfort and recent inventions. The worst that can be said for these things is that they keep people's minds in a perpetual rapid distraction, like the daily press; but no one can deny that many are good in themselves if we know how to use them properly. It is not a bad thing for people to be able to have electric refrigerators. The desire to "keep up one's standard of living" is not primarily self-indulgence, though a good deal of self-indulgence may accompany it: it is primarily a desire in which good and bad motives are mixed, to maintain, or to improve social status. The desire of parents, in a social situation which they cannot individually change, to give their children "the same advantages they had themselves" (whether these are all real advantages or not) is a very natural one; but these advantages are maintained only at the cost of diminishing families in each generation. What is most alarming, though one reads little about it, is the pressure on the professional and clerical classes, the classes from the progeny of which we might expect that high average of intelligent and conscientious mediocrity which is the best that one can breed for. They are obliged to maintain a "standard of living" which, on the salaries they get, makes the rearing of families a luxury. And whether one believes that clergy should marry or not, it must be admitted that the proportion of able men, in the last three hundred years, who have been the sons or grandsons of clergymen, must be a very high one: and clergy – of all denominations – are among the classes of decreasing prosperity.

I am not suggesting that the economic causes of depopulation are the only ones; but we shall get nowhere unless we take them into account; and I think we may say that the deepest causes are economic. My point is that the problem will not be solved merely by offering niggardly inducements (at the taxpayer's expense) to those whose standard of life is already so low that it ought to be improved first. The agricultural districts perhaps deserve place of importance, for it is from the country that the towns are alimented and not vice versa; but no remedy is more than a nostrum that does not release from penury what may be called the intellectual classes, or which does not increase liberty instead of still further restricting it.

It has now become almost obligatory for every intellectual to issue some public statement of opinion on the subject of Peace. Mr. Aldous Huxley's strange little pamphlet has at last drawn the fire of the *Left Review* crowd,

in the form of another little pamphlet by Mr. Day Lewis.[7]* Mr. Lewis writes in a chirpy and come-off-it style in contrast to Mr. Huxley's more orthodox elegance (I wish that either of them could write as well as Mr. Russell at his best). The demerit of this kind of pamphleteering warfare is, that each side believes that it has established its own case when it has demolished at least a part of the enemy fortifications. There is a great deal in Mr. Day Lewis's criticism of Mr. Huxley with which I agree strongly, but there are weak spots in Mr. Lewis's case which Mr. Huxley is certain to find if he takes the trouble. It is possible for a Christian to agree cordially with Mr. Day Lewis, in so far as the affairs of this world are concerned, that "All action is contaminated" [10]; and to admit that he has scored a point off Mr. Huxley, whose weakness is that he is neither a materialist nor a Christian. And as for the importance of the economic causes of war, a number of us who are not of Mr. Day Lewis's party have been hammering at that for a long time past. But Mr. Day Lewis suffers from the weaknesses of most Englishmen of his belief. There is nothing, for these people, to be said for fascism; and there is nothing to be said against bolshevism. When Mr. Huxley (or anybody else) expresses scepticism about Russian democracy, he is met with the rejoinder: "Let Mr. Huxley be patient. Rome was not built in a night, and we cannot expect Communism to be achieved in twenty years" [17]. But if you don't believe that Russia is already a Paradise, then the Webbs are introduced (like medical specialists to impress the jury in a murder trial): for nobody can venture to doubt the Webbs, who, says Mr. Day Lewis, have "something of a reputation as 'reliable observers'" [18].[8] Russia has *voluntarily* abandoned a colonial empire! (What is a colonial empire?) And if Russia does ever meddle in the affairs of another nation, that is not for the nefarious reasons of the fascist countries, but in the interest of Peace. For Mr. Day Lewis believes that "a world union of Socialist states, whose economic policy is based on production for use, not for profit, is the final goal at which every lover of peace should be aiming" [28]. If you really love peace, therefore, you are bound in conscience to lend a hand to the people in any country who want to communize that country. That is what Mr. Day Lewis would like the non-Socialist government of Britain to do in Spain. But Mr. Day Lewis suffers from the same trouble as many of the Labour Party. He is the opposite of a Jingo; for though he *does* want to fight, he is not so sure about wanting the ships, the men, the money too.[9] He says: "while we admit that democracy must be armed for the present, we are not willing to place huge armaments in the irresponsible hands of an

imperialist government" [30]. I am no warm friend of the imperialist government, but it seems to me for the present rather less irresponsible than Mr. Day Lewis. And what security have we that a world of Socialist states will be any more fraternal than the present world, or that the "classless" society of one country will be ready to forego advantages so that the "classless" society of another country may benefit? Is not the ideal possibly that of a universal Russian imperialism, an imperialism more grandiose than anything heretofore achieved, or ever harboured in the imaginations of "imperialist" nations?

The great danger at the moment seems to me to be the delusion of the "Popular Front," which is so seductive to the intelligentsia of every country.[10] Our Liberal practitioners have so hypnotized themselves with the bogey of fascism that they seem to be, like Tibetan initiates, in a fair way to give it form and activity. Those professed "realists," who so far surrender principles as to join in a Popular Front which is meaningless unless it is an extreme Left Front, will have only themselves to thank if they find that they have conjured up a spirit which will not go back into the bottle, and which will be an Unpopular Front.

T. S. E.

NOTES

1. *Political and Economic Writings* (London: Stanley Nott, 1936), with a separate description on the title page: "From *The New English Weekly* 1932-1934, with a preliminary section from *The New Age* 1912"; arranged by Montgomery Butchart with the advice of T. S. Eliot, Philip Mairet, Maurice Reckitt and other members of the Editorial Committee of *NEW*. TSE's tribute to Orage appeared in the *NEW* of 15 Nov 1934 (5.146). He added his "second thoughts" on Orage in his "Commentary" of Jan 1935 (5.148).

2. From 1838 to 1848, Chartism was a political movement of workingmen focused on social and industrial reform. In 1450, Jack Cade (ca. 1420-1450) led a popular but unsuccessful rebellion against corruption and other abuses of power in the regime of Henry VI. TSE would have read Shakespeare's dramatization of this episode in *Henry VI, Part 2.*

3. Florilegium (OED): "a collection of the flowers of literature." In his "Commentary" of Jan 1934, TSE criticizes the patriotic histories of G. M. Trevelyan and Winston Churchill and describes Harold Laski as the "acknowledged master" of second-rate prose in his socialistic writings (5.3). The economic theories of Silvio Gesell and Irving Fisher became popular during the Great Depression: they advocated for stamp scrip, in which currency would be periodically taxed with a stamp in order to discourage hoarding. In 1932-33, the experiment was tried with some success in the small Austrian town of Wörgl, then spread to other townships in Austria and Germany, until national governments intervened to cancel all of the programs. A reformation of currency that devolved power onto local governments, it was an economic practice that Ezra Pound followed with enthusiasm.

4. In "Higher Death-Rate / Increase in Infant Mortality" (*The Times*, 23 Jan 1937), the Registrar-General reported a "provisionally estimated" birthrate for England and Wales during 1936: "The birth-rate for 1936 is 0.1 above that for 1935 and 0.4 above that of 1933, the lowest on record. The crude death-rate is 0.4 above that of 1935 and 0.7 above that of 1930, the lowest on record. The infant mortality is 2 above that of 1935, which was the lowest on record, and is the same as that of 1934, the previous lowest on record. . . . The birth and death rates, for England as a whole are calculated on the estimated mid-1936 population, but those for the towns' aggregates and for London are calculated on the estimated mid-1935 populations" (7).

5. The *Westminster Shorter Catechism* (1647-48) has as its first question: "What is the chief end of man?" To which the answer is: "Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever."

6. In "A Dwindling Birthrate / The Problem in Sweden" (*The Times*, 13 Feb 1937), a committee of the Swedish government reported that "the present Swedish birth-rate is about 30 percent below the minimum level required to maintain a stationary population. . . . The middle classes as a whole, and particularly in Stockholm, are so bent upon the search for comfort, not to say luxury, that they have lost interest in the family. So long as they consider marble baths and electric refrigerators to be more important than children the birth-rate will go on declining" (11).

7*. TSE's note: "[C. Day Lewis,] *We're* not *going to do nothing*. [London:] The Left Review [1936. Pp. 31] 6d." The pamphlet is described on the title page as "(A reply to Mr. Aldous Huxley's Pamphlet, *What are you going to do about it?*)." TSE discusses Huxley's pamphlet, subtitled *The Case for Constructive Peace*, in his *Criterion* "Commentary" of July 1936 (5.380).

8. Sidney Webb and his wife, Beatrice Webb (1858-1943), prominent Fabians and strong supporters of the Soviet Union after their trip there in 1932, provided a positive assessment of Stalin's regime in their co-authored *Soviet Communism: A New Civilisation?* (1935). Day Lewis continues: "The Webbs have proclaimed Russia to be the most democratic country in the world. But even if he rejected this claim, would Mr. Huxley be prepared to answer in the negative this question: Is there not more freedom, more happiness, more of that 'co-operative spirit' – which he himself so justly approves – in Soviet Russia than there was in Czarist Russia?" (18).

9. TSE alludes to the refrain of "By Jingo" (1878), a popular music hall song by G. W. Hunt, written in support of British military policy toward Russia: "We don't want to fight, / But by Jingo! If we do, / We've got the ships, we've got the men, / We've got the money too."

10. "We must, in fact," writes Day Lewis, "establish a People's Front in this country on the same lines as that recently set up in France – and we must do it *at once*. The backbone of this People's Front should be, I believe, the Labour Movement. It is therefore essential that unity should be established within that movement" (30). The Popular Front in the United Kingdom, an alliance of left-wing political parties, was founded in Dec 1936 by the Liberal MP Richard Acland, the Communist writer and former MP John Strachey, the Labour Party economist G. D. H. Cole, and the Conservative MP Robert Boothby. The background for TSE's skepticism includes Soviet Russia's willingness to allow Communists in other countries (notably France) to form antifascist governments with socialists and liberals.

Introduction to *Revelation*, eds. John Baillie and Hugh Martin[1]

London: Faber & Faber, 1937. Pp. xxiv + 312; Introduction 1-39.

What I have to write is not an introduction to the essays in this book, but an introduction to the subject; and it is because I am not a theologian that I have been asked to contribute. I am not to concern myself with the different forms in which men may hold a doctrine of revelation, or with the consequences they may deduce from it; either with the different theological systems, nor with the different Christian communions. I am concerned with the general differences between those who maintain a doctrine of revelation and those who reject all revelation. I am assumed to have an intimate and affectionate acquaintance with the limbo and lower regions in which the secular world moves: a knowledge of objects towards which the theological mind is not often directed. My qualification is the eye of the owl, not that of the eagle.

I take for granted that Christian revelation is the only full revelation; and that the fullness of Christian revelation resides in the essential fact of the Incarnation, in relation to which all Christian revelation is to be understood.

The division between those who accept, and those who deny, Christian revelation I take to be the most profound division between human beings. It does not merely go deeper than divisions by political faith, divisions of class or race; it is different in kind, and cannot be measured by the same scale. It need not cancel these divisions, in so far as they represent principles of union and not of discord. To deny the ties of blood and of congeniality wholly would be to widen the chasm between the Church and the World, and obstruct our indirect, still more than our direct, missionary activity. The emphasis should be on what binds together Christians the world over, rather than on what divides them from others: so that Christian brotherhood should be not merely an idea held, a phrase spoken, but something consistently felt. Nevertheless, it is well for us to study what I may call the folk-lore and practices of the non-Christian world, for we shall not convert it unless we understand it.

The line to be drawn between the Christian and the non-Christian world is at present extremely difficult to draw. It is not enough, for our

present purposes, to propound the wholesome reflexion that not all those who deny Christ are necessarily His enemies, and that many who profess Him are living by the World. The first remark to be made is that not even the *Oxford English Dictionary* definition of secularism is quite comprehensive:

> The doctrine that morality should be based solely on regard to the well-being of mankind in the present life, to the exclusion of all considerations drawn from belief in God or in a future state.

A doctrine of morality based not *solely*, but *primarily*, on regard to the well-being of mankind in the present life might also be classified as secularist. Also, what escapes the necessary concision of a dictionary definition, notions of what the "present life" is, and accordingly of what "well-being" is, may vary extremely; and we can only say that secularism *tends* to restrict the conception to what we call, still vaguely, "material" well-being. And finally, a belief may be far from excluding considerations drawn from belief in God or in a future state, and yet, because of its conception of the nature of God, or of the future state, still be predominantly secularist.

The first error would be to identify secularism with what was called rationalism. I say "what was called," because the word "rationalism" can in general mean so much that in particular it is likely to mean something very much less, and to have accidental associations. The rationalism of the nineteenth century (that of the Rationalist Press Society) now seems very old-fashioned: the rationalism of Tyndall, Haeckel, and Mr. Bernard Shaw.[2] This antiquation is not the result of any religious revival but, I believe, of a further stage of religious decay. In countries like France where Christianity still means for the most part the Roman Catholic Church, and means a traditional Catholicism rather than one of individual conversion, the *non*-Christian forces are still *anti*-Christian, and therefore maintain a repudiation of anything that might be associated with religion. The sceptical state of mind is there still fundamentally Cartesian; and in spite of the appearance of Bergson – whose mind does not seem to me characteristically French – I am inclined to believe that philosophies which admit the inclusion of the irrational, or of anything which eludes rational grasp – such as *vitalism* – are more natural to non-"Latin" countries where the decay of Christianity has followed a different route.[3] The English rationalism of the nineteenth century – not only that of the popular scientists but that of literary folk like George Eliot and Leslie Stephen – had more in common

with Latin rationalism of today; though there was in it a rigid Puritan zeal, a confidence that the disappearance of Christianity would coincide with enlightenment and progress, which strikes us as not only obsolete but provincial.[4]

In the English-speaking world of today, the rationalist is no longer quite so rationalistic. The change is partly, and evidently, due to further scientific discovery, and the growth of popular belief that no particular scientific theory can be accepted more than provisionally. One may cite such situations as that in which it is necessary for a physicist to hold two contradictory theories at once in order to be able to deal with different phenomena. A greater meekness is observed, and even a rush of scientists to stake out a little quasi-religious territory for themselves.

The formation of the Fabian Society in the latter years of the nineteenth century brought a bubbling-up to the intellectual surface of society of able men of imperfectly developed sensibilities. The kind of philosophy of life which Mr. Shaw and Mr. H. G. Wells had to offer no doubt seemed to them satisfactory for all because it was satisfactory to themselves.[5] If you are so fortunate (from the point of view of this world) as to have no immortal longings, and are furthermore gifted with such fluency in writing as to be kept perpetually entertained by your own talents, you can be easily satisfied. But in some more recent writers we find a more defensive tone: they are anxious to assure their readers that the future, in a world in which science will replace religion, is *not* going to be dreary. The most readable of contemporary popular writers on science is Mr. Gerald Heard. The epilogue to his *Science in the Making* contains the following remarkable statement:[6]

> Man, who has left to appetite the task of finding for him the worth of living, of being the sole sauce with which to give him the gusto to bite off and digest great chunks of the stubborn outer world, will find appetite sated almost before it can stir. Humanity will be bored. This mysterious word which first stole like a grey shadow over the court of *le Roi Soleil* and then spread to all places where men of taste lived beyond the struggle for meats and mates, will percolate down from class to class till all are leisured, all are idly rich with a wealth of time on their hands, no mass of people have ever possessed, ever been embarrassed with, before. If then mankind is not too weary of its life, to fly to making intentionally the accidents, the strains and anxieties which gave it thrills and spurs

> and sudden convictions that life is worth while (but which Nature no longer makes for it) if it is not, through war, deliberately to break down into anarchy the order it has built up, it must find new interest and excitement. There is only one appetite from which this new stock of interest can spring and that is curiosity, the finest of the passions. Curiosity is impersonal and so can remain when all personal appetites have been paid off. Curiosity is not utilitarian and so can carry on when men are sated with means. Curiosity is inexhaustible and so can find fresh fields and new explorations when all the world that man can exploit is ordered, every sight has been seen and every power exercised. [257-58]

I have said that this statement is remarkable. Readers will be reminded, by the turgid style rather than by the ill-constructed sentences, of that remarkable effusion of twenty years ago, Mr. Bertrand Russell's *Free Man's Worship*.[7] There is a considerable difference; there is twenty years' difference. Mr. Heard's affirmation is still more incredible than Mr. Russell's. *Curiosity the finest of the passions!* Vanity of vanities![8]

Another writer for whom I have considerable respect, Mr. Herbert Read, has made a still more recent statement for himself which might be taken as an amendment, rather than a contradiction of Mr. Heard's:

> Just as curiosity is the faculty which drives man to seek out the hidden structure of the external universe, thereby enabling him to build up that body of knowledge which we call Science, so wonder is the faculty which dares man to create what has not before existed, which dares man to use his powers in new ways and for new effects. We have lost this sense of the word "wonderful" – it is one of the most outworn clichés in the language. But actually "wonder" is a better and more inclusive word than "beauty," and what is full of wonder has the most compelling force over the imagination of men.[9]

I adduce these quotations as evidence that the more reflective writers of this generation – those whose attention is not wholly taken up by prospective political and social reforms, and who therefore have the time to consider final ends – feel the need for assuring us that mankind still has something to live for. As the pleasures of iconoclasm subside, most of the idols having been demolished or removed to museums, the iconoclasts find it necessary to look about for objects to supply the needs that the idols

satisfied. The result of offering an *activity*, such as "curiosity" or "wonder," to replace an *end*, is to make that activity appear a great deal more petty and trifling than it is to the person with religious faith. Curiosity or wonder, being exalted above its proper place, becomes a tedious activity, for it becomes merely a restless search for more sensation (it is not worthy of the name of experience) of the same kind. One would have thought that Aristotle had said everything there was to be said on such matters, if the kinds of doctrine that Aristotle refuted had not flourished rather more luxuriantly after his time than before. A sound ethical doctrine is frequently replaced neither by one that is sounder, nor by one that is antithetical to it, but by one or more each of which selects some element of it to the exclusion of others.

A writer who is chronologically half-way between Shaw on the one hand and Heard and Read on the other, Mr. Bertrand Russell, wrote a book called *The Conquest of Happiness*, which may be called a defence of mediocrity. It comes to the conclusion that so far as happiness depends upon oneself, and not upon circumstances, "the recipe for happiness is a very simple one."[10] It is simple, of course, because Mr. Russell simplified the problem to the degree of falsification. I do not propose to analyse his argument, in which is incorporated a great deal of advice, based partly upon the discovery by modern psychology of things that were known already, that is quite commonplace and perfectly acceptable. And he sometimes imagines that he is controverting traditional views when he is merely stating them in a partial way. For instance, he says:

> Professional moralists (*he does not say which*) have made too much of self-denial, and in so doing have put the emphasis in the wrong place. Conscious self-denial leaves a man self-absorbed and vividly aware of what he has sacrificed; in consequence it fails often of its immediate object and almost always of its ultimate purpose. What is needed is not self-denial, but that kind of direction of interest outward which will lead spontaneously and naturally to the same acts that a person absorbed in the pursuit of his own virtue could only perform by means of conscious self-denial. [245-46]

The passage is interesting as a specimen of the confusion of thought into which secularists often fall. Christian ethics, in its true and complete form, has surely always "put the emphasis" in quite another place from that of the "professional moralists" of whom Mr. Russell speaks. Christian morality is

not an end but a means. Mr. Russell simplifies his contrast by making it one simply between *inward* and *outward*. "Professional morality" is for him a kind of egotism: the alternative is to be interested in things and people outside oneself. For the Christian there is a distinction of higher and lower, as well as of inner and outer: (the latter distinction belongs to a somewhat antiquated psychology which used the terms "extravert" and "introvert"). And we may note two further points: one, that there seems to be a suggestion that self-denial is not merely a negative activity to be kept in its place, but that it is a repression to be discouraged; and second, that a traditionally or conventionally "virtuous person" is one absorbed in the pursuit of his own virtue (undefined).

The reason why I have called Mr. Russell's book a gospel of mediocrity is this: that because he finds that the ordinary man or woman is very rarely and not often seriously bothered about the destiny of man, but is in a state fluctuating between happiness and misery, which depends only on his material circumstances and his relations with his family and the people about him, the destiny of man is in consequence something of interest only to those few persons whose futile curiosity (another kind of curiosity than that which Mr. Heard proposes) leads them to worry about such matters. Mr. Russell sets up for our speculative acceptance a theory of life which he believes is that which the majority of men, so far as their self-interest is intelligent, live by. But when such an attitude is exposed in intellectual terms, it becomes something very different from what it is when it is merely lived out. We might say that it is a view of life which is perfectly tenable until it is made articulate. For once we have asked the question: what is the end of man? we have put ourselves beyond the possibility of being satisfied with the answer: "there isn't any end, and the only thing to do is to be a nice person and get on with your neighbours."

It is the difference between answering this question negatively, like Mr. Russell, and finding an unsatisfactory answer, like Mr. Heard or Mr. Read, that marks a difference between two generations of secularists. On the simple political plane, of course, this difference is between the Socialists (rationalists) and the Communists. I should say rather, some Communists, because Communism is comprehensive enough to find a place for many who may be spiritually still Socialists: for those who see it as simply a more efficient machine than Socialism or Capitalism, for those who are moved by immediate humanitarian passions, as well as for those who seek it as a kind of salvation. It will be observed that although Communism does not

attempt to answer the question: what is the end of man? and would I presume affirm such a question to be meaningless, it does offer an answer to another question: what is the end of the individual man or woman? and to many people this answer seems good enough. It is this answer which Communism is able to give to the question: what is the end of the individual? which goes to account for the "conversion" of some notable individualist intellectuals, such as M. André Gide.[11] There is a possible contrast to be drawn here between the conversion of intellectuals in the modern world to Christianity, and their conversion to Communism. The conversion to Christianity is apt to be due, I think, to a latent dissatisfaction with all secular philosophy, becoming, perhaps, with apparent suddenness, explicit and coherent.[12]* A conversion to Communism, on the other hand, may be simply a flight from one extreme to avoid the other; with, on a deeper plane, a desire to satisfy repressed Christian impulses without embracing Christianity. I do not suggest that all cases of conversion can be accounted for in these ways; but I think that the suggestion I have just made would go far to account for M. André Gide. He found his *immoraliste* individualism leading nowhere, or at last to a dead end:[13] and there seemed nothing to do, if he was to avoid Christianity, but to take the other extreme tack.[14]* The satisfactions of individualism failing, M. Gide turns to a doctrine which, while it has nothing to say to the question: what is the end of man? can say a good deal about the self-surrender of the individual to society. The *âme collective* does duty for God.[15] It is noteworthy that M. Gide (in spite of his distinguished connexion with Charles Gide) never took the slightest interest in economics, and still professes an utter ignorance of the subject.[16] (He retains the charming frankness that has always been one of his most admirable qualities.)[17]* I cannot help believing that M. Gide's motive was largely *the desire for his individual salvation* – which can remain a desire of something for oneself; even when it is a desire to escape from oneself. I am the more inclined to this belief because M. Gide's writings have always seemed to me to belong to a class of literature of which they are neither the first nor the last example: that in which the author is moved partly by the desire to justify himself, and partly by the desire to cure himself. The greatest authors have never written for these reasons; but among this class is included much of the best of the second order of writing.[18]*

The Marxist mysticism is not the only secular mysticism that has been propagated in our time. I do not intend to discuss racial or imperial

mysticism, as it does not seem philosophically to merit very much attention. The most remarkable, the most ambitious attempt to erect a secular philosophy of life in our time – though of course not the most influential – is that of the late Irving Babbitt. In a survey like this, Babbitt deserves more attention than any of the other writers whom I have mentioned or shall mention. In the first place, Babbitt's motive was awareness of, alarm at, the ills of the modern secular world; and his work as a whole constitutes the most complete and thorough diagnosis of the malady, as it shows itself in literature, in education, in politics and philosophy, that has been made. His learning was not only prodigious but organized so as at every point to reinforce the structure of his thought. He saw connexions that no other mind would have perceived. He was not a system-builder. What makes him unique is that, while himself a disbeliever, even an opponent of revealed religion, he attacked the foundations of secularism more deeply and more comprehensively than any other writer of our time. His mind, on its periphery, touching questions and philosophies of our time, might be the mind of a Christian; and except from a Christian standard, I do not see how we can object to his conclusions.[19] We have to penetrate to the interior to find cause for dissatisfaction.

I have written elsewhere, and some years ago, about the inadequacy of Babbitt's doctrine of the "higher will" and the "inner check," and I do not propose to repeat my criticism of Babbitt on these points.[20] But a posthumous essay which was published last year (*The Dhammapada: Translated from the Pāli with an Essay on Buddha and the Occident*) gives occasion for a review having a closer bearing upon our subject.[21] The problem is why Babbitt, with such a mind and equipment as, it would seem, could only be supported by Christianity, should have turned to Primitive Buddhism (Hinayana) instead.[22] But first it will help us if we can form some conclusion about what he made of Buddhism.

I think that careful attention to this important and interesting essay will disclose a steady, unconscious desire to evade Christian conclusions at any cost, even at the cost of what may seem to others than the author rather important features of Buddhism. One of the reasons why Buddhism appeals to him is apparently his hostility to Platonic ideas, and his dislike of the Platonic influence upon Christian theology. "Buddha is so disconcerting to us," he says, "because doctrinally he recalls the most extreme of our Occidental philosophers of the flux, and at the same time, by the type of life at which he aims, reminds us rather of the Platonist and the Christian"

[77-78]. Yet he recognizes quite clearly that contrast between the flux and the eternal is quite as vital to Buddhism as to Christianity, for he says later: "According to Buddha, anything that is impermanent is not only unreal but finally illusory" [104]. Throughout the essay he insists upon this difference between Buddhism and Christianity: that in Buddhism one can come to a genuine supernaturalism on "strictly experimental" [80] grounds, for reasons that are "not metaphysical but practical" [84], by knowledge of "immediate data of consciousness" [80], "on psychological grounds" [86], by a "practical and psychological method."[23] It is worth while discovering what can, and cannot, be affirmed on "strictly experimental" grounds, or what it means to be a "critical and experimental supernaturalist" [80]. When Babbitt says "supernaturalist," he does not mean a person who believes in miracles: on that point he is rather guarded. What is specifically supernatural, he says, about Buddha and other religious teachers such as St. Francis, is "their achievement of certain virtues"; of which virtues he puts humility at the head [78-79].[24] It turns out a little later that what we have to do with is not humility, but "the psychic equivalent" of humility, that is, a will that transcends the cosmic order [82]. And he affirms the existence of a "quality of will" peculiar to man as one of the immediate data of consciousness [85]. He is certain of this, and equally certain that the soul and the existence of God are not immediate data of consciousness. Yet he does not consider the question whether we can talk about immediate data of consciousness unless, as is far from the case, we generally agree as to what they are: otherwise, one man's data may turn out to be another man's constructions.

According to Babbitt's scheme, the primacy of a certain "quality of will" distinguishes Buddhism. But at this point he is not apparently contrasting Buddhism with Christianity, but with the views of "Western philosophers" from Descartes down. And he admits that this Buddhistic "quality of will . . . has been almost inextricably bound up in the Occident with the doctrine of divine grace and has been obscured in direct proportion to the decline of this doctrine" [81].

We might complain here that since his Buddhism is by assumption a pure Buddhism, uncorrupted by the practices and doctrines of later times, he ought to contrast it with the equally pure Christianity of whatever period he chose; and that we should not be distracted by corruptions or perversions of Christian doctrine, if we are not allowed to consider those of Buddhism. But while this excellent quality of the will has been obscured in the Occident by the decline of the doctrine of grace, yet it is also the will's

association with this doctrine that Babbitt objects to. For grace does not appeal to the practical, experimental, realistic mind; although this same practical mind can accept the idea of the "higher self" as a self "that one possesses in common with other men" [103]. At this point Babbitt would seem to be very near to Mr. Murry and the mystical Communists: but it is the "individualism" of Buddha that most powerfully attracts him. He observes:

> The person who assumes a genuinely critical attitude is finally forced to accept in some form or other the maxim that man is the measure of all things. If one is told in the words of Plato that not man but God is the measure of all things, the obvious reply is that man nowhere perhaps gives his own measure so clearly as in his conceptions of God. . . . [80]

To which the obvious reply is that this may be an obvious reply, but is a smart and sophistical retort without being an answer. If man gives his own measure in his conception of God, then there must be a God in relation to whom man's conception is measured.

There are moments, indeed, in which Babbitt appears to be offering Buddhism for the serious consideration of the Christian, not as a preferable alternative, but as a complement.

> The true Buddhist, like the true Christian, takes a gloomy view of the unconverted man; [102]

> His paradox of true self-love, interpreted in the light of renunciation, does not turn out so very differently from the Christian paradox of dying that one may live. [103-04]

> In general, a collateral benefit of any comprehension one may achieve of Buddha is that it will help one to a better understanding of Christ. [115]

> Religion also looks upon life as a process of adjustment. This process as envisaged by the Christian is summed up once for all in Dante's phrase: "In his will is our peace."[25] A reading of works like the Dhammapada suggests that the psychological equivalent of this form of adjustment was not unknown to Buddha.[26] [119]

One might remark, about the last of these quotations, that it is not proved that there can be any "psychological equivalent"; and it leads us further to remark that Babbitt sometimes appears to be unaware of differences as well as of resemblances between Buddhism and Christianity.

His observations about Christian mysticism suggest that there is perhaps one gap in his immense reading; certainly in his understanding. But his relative estimate of the two religions may be gauged from the following:

> It would seem desirable, then, that those who object on either humanistic or religious grounds to the over-reaching attitude of the scientific naturalists should not burden themselves with any unnecessary metaphysical or theological baggage, and that their appeal should be to experience rather than to some counter-dogma. [118]

Which must be taken as a downright rejection of revelation.

Now, one very remarkable fact strikes the reader the moment he has finished this essay. When Babbitt speaks of Christianity he is apt to be thinking of some of the decayed forms of religiosity that he had seen about him, yet he is concerned with a faith that men had been professing to live by during nearly two thousand years. When he speaks of Buddhism, he is dealing with a refined abstraction, with the texts of the master's sayings. He is comparing not Buddha and Christ, or Buddhism and Christianity, but Buddha and Christianity. And there is a still more remarkable oversight. I do not think that his argument, or rather persuasion, is so much invalidated by his rejection of what came after Buddha, as by his ignoring of what came before. Buddha may be regarded as a reformer of a religion that had been in existence for a long time before him, and one of the assumptions of that religion was the doctrine of reincarnation. Babbitt says in passing: "A Buddha is supposed to be immediately aware not merely of his own Karma, but, at will, of the Karma of others" [93]. But he does not tell us whether he himself believes in karma and in reincarnation, or in the doctrine that there have been many Buddhas. One would like to know whether these are questions of "unnecessary metaphysical and theological baggage," or of experience. Whether the Buddha himself believed in these doctrines is not quite the point either: the point is that reincarnation was so deep in the mentality of his hearers as to be a category of their thought, and that his teaching assumes its truth. And it is as essential to Buddhism as the future states of heaven and hell are to Christianity.

"Knowledge in matters religious waits upon will" [109]. That seems to me to state, though perhaps one-sidedly, a very important truth. The more intelligent and sensitive the secularist is, the more clearly manifest in him is the deflection of will. And that sentence also I have quoted from Babbitt's essay on Buddhism.

I suggest that the Buddhism of Irving Babbitt is not simply a *purified* Buddhism, essence of Buddhism freed from all gross superstitions and made palatable for the intellectual and cultivated modern man: but that it is an artificial Buddhism – not only purified but *canned*; separated from all the traditional ways of behaving and feeling which went to make it a living religion in its own environments, which made it a religion possible for every level of intelligence and sensibility from the highest to the lowest. It therefore has something in common with the *psychological mysticism* that is a phenomenon of decadence rather than of growth. This is the mysticism which seeks contact with the sources of supernatural power, divorced from religion and theology; the mysticism which must always be suspect, and which sometimes springs up in cults whose aims are not far removed from those of magic.

It is significant that this psychological mysticism has recently appeared in the work of a writer very far removed from Irving Babbitt in attitude, a writer the majority of whose works Babbitt would probably have associated with much of what he disapproved. The mixture of violent prejudice with sympathetic interest in Christianity displayed in the writings of Babbitt has a curious analogue in the writings of Mr. Aldous Huxley. Most of our Communists show indifference, rather than hostility, to Christianity: an indifference only possible on a foundation of ignorance, insensibility and incuriosity. Mr. Huxley is neither ignorant, insensitive nor incurious; he has attempted to maintain an intelligent scepticism in a world of increasing barbarism. He has often written about Christianity, breathing a kind of low fire and chilly fury that seem to indicate that it has some interest for him. It is interesting, therefore, after considering Babbitt on the Dhammapada, to read the last page of Mr. Huxley's Peace Pamphlet (*What Are You Going to Do About It?*). Here we find him advocating the practice of "meditation" (to which Babbitt also was devoted) specifically for the purpose of bringing about the Will to Peace.

> [T]he sources of the will lie below the level of consciousness in a mental region where intellect and feeling are largely inoperative. Whatever else they may be – and many theological and psychological theories have been elaborated in order to explain their nature and their mode of action – religious rites, prayer and meditation are devices for affecting the sources of the will. It is a matter of empirical experience that regular meditation on, say, courage or peace often helps the meditator to be

> brave and serene. Prayer for moral strength and tenacity of purpose is in fact quite often answered. Those who, to express in symbolic action their attachment to a cause, take part in impressive ceremonies and rites, frequently come away strengthened in their power to resist temptations and make sacrifices for the cause. There is good evidence that the practice of some kind of spiritual exercise in common is extremely helpful to those who undertake it. . . . Meditation is a psychological technique whose efficacy does not depend on previous theological belief. It can be successfully practised by anyone who is prepared to take the necessary trouble.[27]

This is a very interesting statement. I am certainly not one to deny that "meditation is a psychological technique whose efficacy does not depend on previous theological belief." I only maintain that if it neither depends on previous theological belief nor leads towards it, then it is a technique that must be very suspect indeed. It may turn out to be merely an occult means of getting one's own way; it may foster the *libido dominandi*.[28] Mr. Huxley would be the last to deny this; only he would insist that to meditate to bring about peace is obviously to meditate for a good cause. So far, so good: but from a Christian point of view – from any religious point of view – it cannot be an ultimate good cause, inasmuch as peace itself (the peace of this world) is not an end but a means. There is apt to be impurity of motives in our *natural* devotion even to such a good cause as peace; and in the effort to purify our motives towards peace, the effort to isolate for contemplation the essential idea of peace, we must, I think, be led to the final theological problem of the end of man. Otherwise, it is an endeavour to employ great and unknown forces for immediate and inadequate ends: and that seems to me to be putting ourselves in the utmost spiritual danger. It is an even greater temptation than that of the eudemonism, possibly ataraxy, to which the meditation of Babbitt might lead.

I have not, however, introduced the mysticism of Mr. Huxley for its own interest, and still less in order to discuss the problem of peace, but as a bit of evidence for the thesis that secularism today is not a solid force of disciplined troops, but a varied host of allegiances. And I might say at this point that I do not mean by secularism primarily the various distractions from the Christian life, the various temptations to live on a simply animal level, which occasion so much distress to the faithful. I am not concerned with the cinema, or the press, or the wireless, or the degrading influences of a

mechanized civilization. These are serious enough, but they constitute a minor problem. They represent merely the contemporary form – though it may be a form more powerful and oppressive than any before – of the permanent force of the world against which the spirit must always struggle. I am concerned with the ideas, the philosophies however inchoate, which either tolerate these things or fail to oppose them in the right way. For we must remember that almost every secular philosophy or social system, even those which we must regard as definitely hostile, is itself opposed to *some* of the features of contemporary society that we ourselves condemn.

The fact is that the situation of belief in the modern world is more analogous to that of the later Roman Empire than to any other period that we know. And one of the features of resemblance is the psychological mysticism of which I have been speaking.

There are many other philosophies individually worthy of discussion; and of course this paper would be neater if I did not confine myself almost altogether to examples from England and America, but considered men individually equally important in other countries. I know that I ought to have something to say about Stefan George, and certainly Max Scheler and possibly Friedrich Gundolf;[29] and I ought to have given a succinct historical account of how things came to be as they are, without failing to give due space to Schopenhauer, Wagner and Nietzsche.[30] I should touch upon Schleiermacher and Feuerbach, and I should have a long footnote about Logical Positivism, speculating how much it owes to G. E. Moore on the one hand, and Brentano, Husserl, Meinong and Heidegger on the other.[31] But this is a paper, and not a book; and it is a paper written for a special occasion. It seems to me therefore proper to use the material that is ready in my mind, without either taking time to refresh my memory of authors whom I have read only once, or still less mug up works that I have never read at all. So before making my concluding observations, I shall consider one man who cannot be omitted, an Englishman who cannot be duplicated or replaced by a specimen from any other country, whose position is unique, and whose peculiar attitude towards Christianity does not seem to me to have been quite correctly estimated. That is D. H. Lawrence.

The point is that the will to get out from Christianity into a religion of one's own operated in Lawrence as it operated in Babbitt. The extreme differences between the two men (how they would have disliked each other) account easily for their decamping in quite opposite directions; but there is a certain similarity in the motive. Both men sprang from environments

which (however different in other ways) gave them an early experience of Christianity at anything but its best; and they failed ever completely to see Christianity as anything but the Christianity that entered into their early and important sensitive experience. Less passionate and powerful men, in a similar way on their own level, have gone through life unable to identify Christianity with anything more than the unpleasant smell of their school chapel, or a particular preceptor whom they disliked. We have found in Babbitt a suspiciously determined will not to be taken in – a will to be "modern," "empirical" and "experimental" at all costs, even the cost of using such words only as emotional exclamations. Lawrence is less complicated and in some respects less interesting. His will against Christianity is easier to understand. For Babbitt was by nature an educated man, as well as a highly well-informed one: Lawrence, even had he acquired a great deal more knowledge and information than he ever came to possess, would always have remained uneducated. By being "educated" I mean having such an apprehension of the contours of the map of what has been written in the past, as to see instinctively where everything belongs, and approximately where anything new is likely to belong; it means, furthermore, being able to allow for all the books one has not read and the things one does not understand – it means some understanding of one's own ignorance. With these two odd handicaps – the will against Christianity that was a residue of childhood and adolescence, and the temperament of *un*education – Lawrence started out on a lifelong search for a religion.

Whatever his disadvantages, a man of the ability of Lawrence, and with such an addiction, can be of very great value indeed; and it is as an investigator of the religious life – as a kind of *contemplative* rather than a theologian – that he seems to me to take a high place with most right [*sic*]. People have deplored the spoiling of the remarkable novelist of *Sons and Lovers* for the making of a medicine man; but much as I admire that rather sickly and morally unintelligible book, I find the medicine man much more important than the novelist.[32] Mr. Aldous Huxley, in his admirable preface to Lawrence's collected letters,[33]* says "Lawrence was always and unescapably an artist."[34] He does not seem to me an artist at all, but a man with a sketch-book: his poetry, very interesting amateur work, is only notes for poems.[35] Mr. Huxley says significantly a little later: "the fact of his being an artist explains a life which seems, when you forget it, inextricably strange."[36] The truth is, of course, that an artist needs to live a commonplace life if he is to get his work done – a life far more of routine, and indeed less

"inextricably strange" than that of a politician or a stockbroker. An artist may have elements in his composition that drive him towards excesses of one kind or another, but a failure to keep these in hand leads to a failure in his art. But I think of Lawrence neither as an artist, nor as a man who failed to be an artist; I think of him, as I have suggested, as a researcher into religious emotion. And unless we see him as this, we are apt to attach too much importance to his views on sex and on society, to his psychological extravaganzas, and to personal peculiarities which may account for his aberrations. With the criticism of Lawrence's particular doctrines – his feminism,[37]* his *âme collective*, his unconscious, I am for the most part in agreement with Mr. Wyndham Lewis in the section of his *Paleface* that he devotes to Lawrence.[38] But I think that something valuable remains, if we know how to use it.

In the oscillation – of which I shall speak presently – of secular philosophies between antithetical extremes, there is one pair of opposites which it is pertinent to mention at this point. The human mind is perpetually driven between two desires, between two dreams each of which may be either a vision or a nightmare: the vision and nightmare of the material world, and the vision and nightmare of the immaterial. Each may be in turn, or for different minds, a refuge to which to fly, or a horror from which to escape. We desire and fear both sleep and waking; the day brings relief from the night, and the night brings relief from the day; we go to sleep as to death, and we wake as to damnation. We move, outside of the Christian faith, between the terror of the purely irrational and the horror of the purely rational. Lawrence had a really extraordinary capacity for being exacerbated by the modern world of enlightenment and progress, whether in a Midland mining village or in metropolitan intellectual society. This world was his nightmare; he wanted a world in which religion would be real, not a world of church congresses and religious newspapers, not even a world in which a religion could be *believed*,[39]* but a world in which religion would be something deeper than belief, in which life would be a kind of religious behaviourism. Hence the prancing Indians, who, in *Mornings in Mexico*, inspired some of his finest and most brilliant writing.[40] He wished to go as low as possible in the scale of human consciousness, in order to find something that he could assure himself was *real*.

The attempt is fundamentally chimerical. We do not feel that Lawrence really got inside the skin of his Hopis, nor would we wish him to do so, because he was a civilized and sensitively conscious man, and his Indians, one feels, are pretty stupid. He merely gave a marvellous record of how the

Indians affected Lawrence. Yet his mistaken attempt was the result of an awareness of something very important. He was aware that religion is not, and can never survive as, simply a code of morals. It has not even much meaning to say that religion is "good." Other things are good or bad in relation to one's religion. If (I think he would have said) you find you can only accept an "evil" religion, then for God's sake do, for that is far nearer the truth than not having any. For what the evil religion has in common with the good is more important than the differences; and it is more important really to feel terror than to sing comminatory psalms. So he set himself, by an immense effort of will – the same effort that the Christian has to make towards a different end – to believe in nature spirits, and to try to worship stocks and stones. And with the same perseverance he set himself to an attitude of scepticism towards science, for he saw that science only provides a relative truth, and as we cannot know the relations, we do better – the contemporary mind being what it is – to deny it altogether than to accept it as an absolute which it is not.

The religion of Lawrence can be a useful criterion for us in testing the reality of our own faith: it can serve as a constant reminder that Christianity is frightening, frightful and scandalous to that secular mind which we are all compelled to some extent to share. But for itself, it remains on the level of secularism, because it remains a religion of power and magic. Or rather, the religion which Lawrence would have liked to achieve is a religion of power and magic, of control rather than propitiation. What he, being a civilized man, actually arrived at, was, of course, only a religion of autotherapy. It was like the restless search of the hypochondriac for a climate in which he can be cured, or in which at least he can bear his ailments more easily. Perhaps there is this motive in all of us, but if so, at least we can hope that our being aware of it helps to keep it in its place. We can cry, *Thou son of David, have mercy on me*, but we can be healed only if our faith is stronger even than our desire to be healed.[41]

The purpose of this brief, and no doubt apparently capricious, review has been primarily to make the point that we are not suffering today simply from "loss of faith" – a loss of faith which brings with it inexorably a lowered vitality – but from a strong and positive misdirection of the will. I have been concerned chiefly with individualistic misdirections of will, not with the collective misdirections of a political nature; but the latter must

be kept in mind also. I should now like to detail what seem to me the principal characteristics of philosophies without revelation.[42]*

The first characteristic is *instability*. Were there a science of social psychology, it would no doubt provide a set of convenient terms in which to explain the necessity of impermanence. But we may say that any philosophy of life which is the construct of any individual mind, must be conditioned by a great deal of which that individual is unconscious. A man is never pure mind, his mind is conditioned by his sensibility and his physical constitution. It is observable that while impersonality of thought is at best only an ideal towards which some approximation can be reached, in modern philosophy divorced from theology this ideal itself has been surrendered. We are able even to have the *aesthetic* attitude towards philosophy, so that the work of an individual philosopher can be enjoyed, not for whatever in it may be true, but as an artistic presentation of the personality of the philosopher. There are, of course, group-personalities apparent in philosophy as well as individual personalities – so that it is said that Oxford and Cambridge philosophers are unable to understand each other. This is in part a healthy reaction against the "lonely thinker" (Spinoza polishing lenses, the Sage of Koenigsberg, Marx in the British Museum),[43] for of all thinkers the lonely one is likely to be the most controlled by the part of himself he knows nothing about. But however much we get together, we can by human means alone arrive only at the kind of fixity and unanimity of belief which might be attributed to a hive of bees. Ultimately, apart from revelation, there would seem to be no criterion of philosophic credibility.

The second characteristic is *recurrence*. The same philosophies tend to reappear again and again, sometimes by deliberate revival, but perhaps more often unconsciously. We easily believe that something is quite new when it is merely a new form, adapted to place and time, of some doctrine of antiquity. Those who yearn for an earthly paradise have to maintain that the key to human problems has been found for the first time.

The third characteristic is involved in the second: it is *the tendency* of each extreme philosophy *to evoke an opposite*, and sometimes to turn into it by an imperceptible metamorphosis. Thus you get an oscillation between individualism and collectivism; between rationalism and intuitivism; and an immoderate humanitarianism may lead to cruelty and tyranny. All these things spring from titanism, or the attempt to build a purely human world without reliance upon grace.[44]

The fourth characteristic of secular philosophies is *immediate results*. It is easy to invent philosophies that will appear to the uneducated to be more promising than Christianity: which will appear more feasible, valid either for the inventors individually, or for a limited group or under transient conditions of time and place. Secular philosophies must inevitably, in the atmosphere of the modern world, have a seductiveness with which Christianity cannot compete. They are always presented as new, and as capable of setting things right at once.

We must remember also that the choice between Christianity and secularism is not simply presented to the innocent mind, *anima semplicetta*,[45] as to an impartial judge capable of choosing the best when the causes have both been fully pleaded. The whole tendency of education (in the widest sense – the influences playing on the common mind in the forms of "enlightenment") has been for a very long time to form minds more and more adapted to secularism, less and less equipped to apprehend the doctrine of revelation and its consequences. Even in works of Christian apologetic, the assumption is sometimes that of the secular mind.[46*] Any apologetic which presents the Christian faith as a *preferable alternative* to secular philosophy, which fights secularism on its own ground, is making a concession which is a preparation for defeat. Apologetic which proceeds from part to part of the body of Christian belief, testing each by itself according to secular standards of credibility, and which attempts to constitute Christian belief as a body of acceptable parts, so as to end by placing the least possible burden upon faith, seems to me to be a reversal of the proper method. Should we not first try to apprehend the meaning of Christianity as a whole, leading the mind to contemplate first the great gulf between the Christian mind and the secular habits of thought and feeling into which, so far as we fail to watch and pray, we all tend to fall? When we have appreciated the awfulness of this difference, we are in a better position to examine the body of our belief analytically, and consider what is permanent truth, and what is transient or mistaken. As even the disciples, during the life of our Lord and immediately after His death and resurrection, suffered from occasional lapses of faith, what are we to expect of a world in which the will has been powerfully and increasingly misdirected for a long time past? What a discursive reading of the literature of secularism, over a number of years, leads me to believe, however, is that the religious sentiment – which can only be completely satisfied by the complete message of revelation – is simply suffering from a condition of repression painful for

those in whom it is repressed, who yearn for the fulfilment of belief, although too ashamed of that yearning to allow it to come to consciousness.

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. TSE met with J. H. Oldham in early July 1936 to discuss the possibility of writing an introduction. William Temple, Archbishop of York and contributor to the volume, also urged TSE to undertake the project. TSE responded to Temple in a letter of 8 July 1936, admitting that he felt "diffident, and am still diffident, of my qualifications for introducing the essays of distinguished theologians on the central point of the Christian Faith." TSE relays that, in his conversation with Oldham, he agreed to write the introduction only after reviewing the essays of the other contributors. On 9 July, TSE received a formal letter of invitation to write the introduction from editor Hugh Martin who indicated that he would send most of the essays to be collected to TSE for consideration. In a letter to Rev. M. C. D'Arcy, SJ of 11 Jan 1937, TSE comments on Karl Barth's and Sergius Bulgakoff's contributions: "Barth seems to me such a queer mixture of admirable insight and something so alien that I can't make head or tail of it; and as for Bulgakoff's 'Sophia,' it seems to me an unnecessary and rather undesirable character. But that may be my stupidity."

2. The London-based Rationalist Press Association published texts promoting rationalism, secularism, and free inquiry in the humanities. John Tyndall (1820-93), Irish physicist and professor of natural philosophy at the Royal Institution in London; Ernst Haeckel (1834-1919), German biologist and professor of comparative anatomy at the University of Jena.

3. Vitalist philosophy contends that the source of life is not mechanical or chemical but immaterial. One form of vitalism manifests in Bergson's *élan vital* (vital impulse), a theory posited in his *L'Évolution créatrice* (1907) that challenges Darwin's natural selection as the basis of evolution. TSE forcefully expresses his attitude toward Bergson's theory in "Reflections on *Vers Libre*" (1917): "It is assumed that *vers libre* exists. . . . *Vers libre* does not exist, and it is time that this preposterous fiction followed the *élan vital* and the eighty thousand Russians into oblivion" (1.511).

4. In "Style and Thought" (1918), TSE contends that, like Bertrand Russell, George Eliot is "an emancipated Puritan" for her supposed atheism and affirmation of "Moral Law" (1.691). Later, in "Religion and Science: A Phantom Dilemma" (1932), TSE claims that "Christianity survives" in George Eliot's novels "as an austere moral code, tempered by humanitarianism, divorced from the supernatural faith which would justify it" (4.442).

TSE's lecture notes for English 26 designate Leslie Stephen as a model rationalist of the nineteenth century (4.759).

5. George Bernard Shaw and H. G. Wells were members of the English socialist Fabian Society. Shaw edited the first edition of *Fabian Essays in Socialism* (1889) and wrote new prefaces for several reissued editions. TSE reviews the 1931 edition for his *Criterion* "Commentary" of July 1931 (4.305-08), and his copy of the book with marginal comments is in his library. TSE also features Shaw's and Wells's Fabianism as a central topic of discussion in "Lecture IV [Kipling, Belloc, Chesterson, Shaw, Wells]" and "Lecture V [Shaw and Chesterson]" of his English 26 course (4.763-65).

6. *Science in the Making* (London: Faber and Faber, 1935). Gerald Heard (1889-1971), born Henry FitzGerald Heard, was a lecturer, radio commentator, and prolific writer of both fiction and non-fiction.

7. Russell first published *A Free Man's Worship* in 1903. The essay was later collected in *Mysticism and Logic* (1918), which TSE reviewed in "Style and Thought" (1918) (1.690).

8. TSE alludes to Ecclesiastes 1:2: "Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities; all *is* vanity" (KJV).

9. *Surrealism* (London: Faber & Faber, 1936), 90-91

10. *The Conquest of Happiness* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1930), 241. In his *Criterion* "Commentary" of Jan 1931, TSE briefly compares Russell's volume with Freud's *Civilization and its Discontents*, concluding that "mankind is so constituted that many of us can never hope to rise to that level of mediocrity which these authors exhort us to reach." TSE accuses Russell in particular of preaching "a Gospel of Main Street to the converted" (4.218).

11. Although Gide never became a member of the Communist Party, he professed support for its politics in the early 1930s. After traveling to the Soviet Union in 1936, however, Gide documented his disenchantment with the Soviet regime in the travelogue *Retour de l'U.R.S.S.* [*Return from the U.S.S.R.*] (1936). Later, he contributed an essay to *The God that Failed* (1949), a collection of testimonies by ex-communists.

12*. TSE's note: "In this comparison I am deliberately disregarding the operation of grace in order to keep it to the secular plane."

13. TSE alludes to Gide's 1902 novel, *L'Immoraliste*.

14*. TSE's note: "M. Gide's conversion to Communism has been presented as something involving an heroic sacrifice of his creative gifts. It might, of course, be retorted that possibly the exhaustion of M. Gide's creative gifts had something to do with his conversion to Communism."

15. In his Jan 1935 "Commentary" (5.153 n.10), TSE refers to the concept of the "collective soul" and its critique by right-wing, French thinkers.

16. Charles Gide (1847-1932) was André Gide's uncle and a professor of economics at several French universities. His last appointment was at the Collège de France.

17*. TSE's note: "According to the *compte rendu* of a debate which took place a few years ago between M. Gide and some of his non-Communist critics, he professed to have been moved largely by humanitarian motives. I would not depreciate these, but they do not seem quite adequate by themselves."

18*. TSE's note: "For a fervent expression of the desire for salvation by escape from individuality, see an essay by Mr. J. Middleton Murry in a symposium called *Marxism* (Chapman & Hall: 1935). Mr. Murry may have modified his views since and, even if not, might wish to rewrite some of his pages: for on page 105 he says: 'at the heart of Marxism lies a grim effort at "depersonalization," which unless a man has undergone, I do not believe he will ever be a Marxist save in name. Of course, this is true only for the member of "bourgeois society" who becomes a Marxist . . .' But at the end of the same paragraph he says: 'That grim effort at depersonalization, of which I have spoken, is just as incumbent on any proletarian who wants to be a Marxist as upon any bourgeois.' Mr. Murry tells us emphatically that the individual is an illusion, and that 'his sole concrete reality is that of a cell of a social organism, governed by unconscious laws' [104-05]. The point is that Mr. Murry has started with a notion of the 'individual' which is not Christian, in order to end by denying the existence of the individual. He derives Marxism from Spinoza."

In "Notes on the Way [III]" (1935), TSE argues that Spinoza's theory of freedom, appropriated by "young and inexperienced Marxians" like Murry, is a "pagan perversion of a Christian truth" (5.168). In his Apr 1935 "Commentary" for the *Criterion*, TSE objects at greater length to Murry's two essays in *Marxism* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1935): "The New Man," to which TSE refers here, and "Marxism and the Individual" (5.239-40).

19. In his *Criterion* "Commentary" of Oct 1933, written upon Babbitt's death, TSE contends that Babbitt "was by temperament too extreme an individualist to be a system builder. . . . Any attempt to present his works as a body of canonical writings must end in failure, and worse. I have in mind the attempt, a few years ago, by a number of his devoted pupils to present 'humanism' as almost a proprietary medicine recommended for those who cannot 'believe' yet who abominate the radical materialism which is offered as an alternative. . . . I maintain that their 'humanism' would collapse . . . the moment the support gives way; and the support which keeps humanism erect is simply the existence in the world of a body of people . . . who are convinced of the reality of the Christian supernatural order" (4.553). TSE's stance here echoes a letter he wrote to Roger Chitty on 29 Apr 1927: "Babbitt's (unconscious) relation to orthodox Christianity: his doctrine of Grace, in *Democracy and Leadership* [1924], is singularly near to Christianity, and in my opinion cannot be made acceptable without Christianity" (*L3* 491).

20. See "The Humanism of Irving Babbitt" (1928) for TSE's objections to the humanist philosophy of the "higher will" and "inner check" that Babbitt develops in *Democracy and Leadership*: "What Mr. Babbitt, on one side, seems to me to be trying to do is to make humanism . . . work without religion. For otherwise, I cannot see the significance of his doctrine of self-control. . . . Mr. Babbitt seems to think also that the 'outer' restraints of an orthodox religion, as they weaken, can be supplied by the inner restraint of the individual over himself" (3.457).

21. In this volume (New York: Oxford UP, 1936), Babbitt's essay "Buddha and the Occident" appears after his revision of Max Müller's 1870 translation of the Dhammapada, a sacred text in the Pāli Canon that compiles 423 short verses of Buddha's teachings.

22. Hīnayāna, which translates to "Small Vehicle," is now considered a derogatory term for a branch of Buddhism distinguished from Mahāyāna, the "Great Vehicle."

23. *Read*: "positive and psychological method" (91). In his comparison of Buddhism and Christianity, Babbitt argues: "As for the ordinary, or natural self, Buddha often uses language that reminds one of Christianity. . . . According to Buddha, anything that is impermanent is not only unreal but finally illusory. In virtue of his psychological method, however, he does not as a rule dwell, after the fashion of the Hindu philosopher, on illusion in general (*māyā*) but on conceit or the illusion of the ego (*manas*). The eliminations imposed . . . are, even from the point of view of the austere Christian, extremely drastic" (103-04).

24. "The essence of humility in Christianity is the submission not merely of man's will but of the will of Christ himself to the will of the divine personality. If one is to understand how Buddha avoids asserting any such personality and at the same time retains humility one needs to reflect on what it means to be a critical and experimental supernaturalist. It means first of all that one must deny oneself the luxury of certain affirmations about ultimate things and start from the immediate data of consciousness. It is hard to see, for example, how one can affirm, on strictly experimental grounds, a personal God and personal immortality. If a man feels that these tremendous affirmations are necessary for his spiritual comfort, he should turn to dogmatic and revealed religion which alone can give them" (80).

25. *Read*: "'His will is our peace.'" *Paradiso* III.85 (*DC3* 31).

26. *Read:* "to the Buddhist."

27. *What Are You Going to Do about It? The Case for Constructive Peace* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1936), 34. In his *Criterion* "Commentary" of July 1936, TSE briefly dismisses Huxley's peace pamphlet (5.380). He explains his distaste for Huxley's "psychological mysticism" further in a letter to Huxley on 24 July 1936: "I still feel a little unhappy about the psychological mysticism at the end of your pamphlet. It does seem to me that unless one has the space to make this explicit, it may be taken very queerly by some readers. I do feel that the latter part of your pamphlet shifts to quite a different plane from the first. I feel that it is a much more important plane and that therefore the brevity of that discussion leaves one unsatisfied. I feel that anything like the practice of meditation ought to be clearly founded on some purpose more profound than simply the desire to maintain what we call a state of peace." Another brief rejection of Huxley's pamphlet can be found in TSE's *Criterion* "Commentary" of Jan 1937 (5.411-12).

28. *libido dominandi*: the lust for domination, from St. Augustine's *De civitate Dei*

29. Stefan George (1868-1933), German lyric poet associated with Stéphane Mallarmé and the Symbolist movement. The George-Kreis, a literary school centered around him, included Friedrich Gundolf among its members. TSE published Gundolf's essay on Eduard Mörike in the July 1931 *Criterion*.

Phenomenologist Max Scheler's "Future of Man" appeared in the *Criterion* of Feb 1928 (100-19).

30. In his eighth Clark Lecture (1926), TSE refers in passing to the "Kantian pseudo-Buddhism of Schopenhauer" (2.746). In a similar vein, TSE identifies Schopenhauer's "mystical philosophy . . . the same mystical philosophy which is infused into the music dramas of Wagner" as an influence on Jules Laforgue (4.751).

In "Shakespeare and the Stoicism of Seneca" (1927), TSE aligns Nietzsche's philosophy with Stoicism unfavorably: "Stoicism . . . is the permanent substratum of a number of versions of cheering oneself up. Nietzsche is the most conspicuous modern instance of cheering oneself up," an "attitude," TSE continues, that "is the reverse of Christian humility" (3.249). TSE also alludes to the anti-Christian sentiments of Nietzsche's *Human, All Too Human* (1878) and *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (1883-91) in "The Modern Dilemma" (1933) (4.814).

31. Friedrich Schleiermacher was a German philosopher and theologian known for his religious empiricism. In *On Religion: Speeches to its Cultured Despisers* (1799), he defines religious experience as a direct intuition or feeling of God. Ludwig Feuerbach (1804-72) was a German philosopher and skeptic of revealed religion whose thought influenced Karl Marx. In *The Essence of Christianity* (1841), Feuerbach argues that God is merely an external projection of human consciousness.

Logical Positivism, a philosophical movement centered in Vienna in the 1920s, rejects metaphysics as the basis of knowledge in favor of scientific, publicly verified experimentation. Franz Brentano (1838-1917) was a German philosopher of psychology who resigned from the Catholic priesthood. He is best known for theorizing the concept of intentionality and for his charismatic teaching. Brentano mentored both Husserl and Meinong.

32. In his lecture notes for English 26, TSE jots: "Sons and Lovers is devoid of moral sense, an evil book" (4.785), and later, "Sons and Lovers is an immoral book, because no sense of

individual's duty to society: only the old Radical Manchester School view of the right of the superior individual to rise in society" (4.788).

33*. TSE's note: "Reprinted in Mr. Huxley's recent volume of essays, *The Olive Tree* [London: Chatto & Windus, 1937]."

34. *The Letters of D. H. Lawrence*, ed. Aldous Huxley (New York: Viking, 1932), ix; *Olive Tree*, 199. TSE's copy of *The Letters* is inscribed Jan 1933; he quoted and discussed one of Lawrence's letters in the edition in his lecture on "English Poets as Letter Writers" at Yale University in Feb 1933 (4.846).

35. Notes for the "Anglo-American Poetry" section of English 26, in which TSE expounds the "Evils of Free Verse," indicate plans to justify his description of Lawrence's verse as "notes for poems" (4.778).

36. *Read:* "the fact of his being an artist explains a life which seems, if you forget it, inexplicably strange" (*Letters*, x; *Olive Tree*, 201).

37*. TSE's note: "The most objectionable feature of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* is surely the view of the male as merely an instrument for the purposes of the female."

38. Wyndham Lewis devotes part of the section "Love? What Ho! Smelling Strangeness" (174-237) of *Paleface: The Philosophy of the "Melting Pot"* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1929) to short studies on Lawrence, including one subsection entitled "Communism, Feminism, and the Unconscious found in the Mexican Indian by Mr. Lawrence" (180-84). TSE suggested that his students read *Paleface* in his English 26 course (4.792).

39*. TSE's note: "Compare, for a very different attitude to a similar apprehension, the words of Dom John Chapman (*Spiritual Letters* [New York: Sheed & Ward, Inc., 1935], page 47): '. . . the *corresponding trial* of our contemporaries seems to be the *feeling of not having any faith*; not temptations against any particular article (usually), but a mere feeling that religion is not true. It is an admirable purgative, just as the 18th cent. one was; it takes all pleasure out of spiritual exercises, and strips the soul naked. It is very unpleasant.' Lawrence saw no need for standing up to this. It would be unfair to say that he ran away; because it never occurred to him that there was any other course to take."

40. Lawrence's *Mornings in Mexico* (1927) is a collection of travel writing about the indigenous peoples of Mexico and the American Southwest.

41. Bartimaeus the blind man of Jericho calls out: "Jesus, *thou* Son of David, have mercy on me." Luke 18:38 (KJV).

42*. TSE's note: "One might mention at this point the characteristics of those religions which are non-historical. But it does not fall within the scope of this paper, which is concerned with secularism, to expound the view (implicit in what I say) that revelation in the complete sense is the Incarnation. I refer the reader to the essay in this book by the Archbishop of York."

43. Spinoza ground lenses primarily as a mode of experimentation, rather than as a source of income, as is often reported; Kant never left the city of Königsberg; and Marx wrote *Das Kapital* in the British Museum.

44. Titanism (OED): 1a. "Revolt against the order of the universe."

45. *l'anima semplicetta* (Dante, *Purgatorio* XVI.88): "the simple, tender soul" (*DC2* 196-97). TSE marked this passage in his copy (Houghton) and alluded to it in the opening of "Animula" (1929).

46*. TSE's note: "For instance, the doctrine of the damnation of unbaptized infants has been commonly rejected in recent times simply because it is repugnant. But the development of the state of mind to which this doctrine is repugnant must itself be examined before we can accept it with confidence; and the question of the repugnance of a doctrine is not the same as that of its truth. This is perhaps the extreme case, but it is obviously very dangerous to rely on a sentiment of recent growth, especially when the higher religious emotions have certainly tended to atrophy or occlusion."

The Church as an Ecumenical Society

TSE delivered this unpublished address as a delegate to the World Conference of Churches, held in Oxford from 12 to 26 July 1937 on issues concerning its theme, "Church, Community and State." Invited to be a delegate and speaker by organizer J. H. Oldham, TSE was the first of three plenary speakers under the session title "The Ecumenical Nature of the Church and its Responsibility toward the World," presented in the Town Hall, 5:00-6:30 p.m. on the fifth day of the Conference, 16 July. The Rt. Rev. V. S. Azariah, the first Bishop of Dornakal, South India, presided. TSE's address was reported in *The Times* of 17 July under the heading "The Church and the World / Problem of Common Social Action" (18), and in the *Church Times* of 23 July in an article entitled "Church, Community and State / A Busy Week at the Oxford Conference" (83).

I have been asked to speak on "The Church as an Ecumenical Society," with special reference to the admirable mise au point by Dr. Visser 't Hooft in pp. 88-95 of the book "The Church" by himself and Dr. Oldham.[1] In speaking to this question, one might equally well be speaking with concern for "Faith and Order" and for "Life and Work."[2] What I have to say bears upon the relation of these two fields of exploration. What is the relation of "Faith and Order" to "Life and Work"? What is the relation of re-union to social action?

I wrote: "I prepare these words without knowing what subjects will have been threshed out during the first four days of the conference; and I must therefore risk saying what may have already been said." My question is: what is the relation of common belief to common social action?

It is perhaps worth mentioning at the beginning something that is when mentioned quite obvious, that the question of common action amongst various communions is preceded by the question of common action within one communion. For I do not believe that there is a single Christian community to-day – not excepting the Roman Catholic – which has, within the realm of social action, solved the question: to what action are we all as common believers committed? and in what are differences of private judgment permissible? The question of War and Peace, of absolute and relative Pacifism, is the most conspicuous. Not one communion, I venture to say – and my own is not one of the least divided – has any unanimous opinion about the relation of the temporal and the spiritual power. I only mention this, to remind you of the obvious fact that before the various communions

can agree completely, each must agree with itself. Each must decide for itself what is obligatory for its members, and what may be left to private judgment. But meanwhile, we may still ask, what cooperation is possible between the various branches of the Christian Church?

There are two kinds of cooperation which I think should be clearly distinguished. First, when Christianity is persecuted as such. I have no need to give instances, and indeed it is better not. In resistance to oppression which bears upon all because of what all have in common – however difficult it may be to formulate in theological terms what that common belief is – different communions may be drawn together. I would not say that under such continued oppression, these different communions might not tend to divest themselves of unessential differences between themselves; I would not say that under such continued pressure, if continued long enough, they might not tend towards a common mentality and temperament. Nevertheless, I would say that the cooperation and sympathy of churches under positive oppression, is a phenomenon limited by these circumstances and dependent upon them; and that it is a very different thing from the search for common grounds of action when all are enjoying liberty. Combinations formed against a common enemy, may only last as long as the enemy remains strong – and common.

Let us therefore ignore the possibilities of common action under oppression, and ask: what common social action is possible for the churches in a condition of freedom when none has any great advantage over another in relation to the secular world? What I wish to insist upon is the absolute difference between common action in a crisis, that is, at a moment when all Christianity seems threatened, and common action of a steady and positive kind. It is the difference between what I may call political action – that is, action dictated by circumstances which we meet as something outside and immediate – and a positive programme of Christianity.

It is obvious that even before the disruption of Christianity, local, racial and linguistic differences were apparent. The spirit of the Greek fathers is not quite the same as that of the Latin fathers. In later times, the differences of temperament were of course more manifest among the mystics – the feeling of English mysticism, and Scottish, and German and Spanish is quite different – but also, I believe, different tendencies can be found in the contributions of different races to scholastic philosophy. Ideally, when the Church is united, the contributions of various peoples to Christian thought and worship and behavior may be considered as complementing and

correcting each other; an active life is stimulated by balanced forces; and (especially with the use of a common language like Latin) the effort is to arrive at a universal truth the possibility of which is assumed – while the contributions and conflicts of the several elements proceed unconsciously. But to-day, the national or racial element in our differences is something which is very clearly in consciousness. Our forms of worship, our theology, have been fractured by two great forces: that which may roughly be called nation or race or language – for it is impossible to dissociate these three elements; and that which may roughly be called class or social group. The former is shown by comparing one country with another, the latter may be illustrated within any one country; and both may be found together in the United States of America, where the churches represent both racial and social divisions.

Now I think that a sensible philosophy, whether Christian or secular, will neither exalt race or nation or class to an unnatural primacy, nor attempt on the other hand to eradicate these differences. Differences of race, like those of class, should represent differences of function in a universal society, rather than a struggle, a truce or a reason for isolation. But if we hold before ourselves the ideal of the oecumenical society, we must first take the facts as we find them, and become more conscious, and arrive at some agreement, about how they came to be what they are. In other words, I think that we need to take account, not only of the actual differences of faith and order, but of the sociological differences. In a world which for many generations has done its thinking, and especially its theological thinking, very largely in compartments of nation and class, certain measures of criticism are lost, and the communions, in not knowing each other, cease to know themselves. I think that the present interest of different Christian communions in finding out more about each other is one of the most hopeful signs we have, because in learning more about each other, each will learn more about itself.

A church which is not universal, will tend unconsciously in the course of its development to acquire accretions, local customs and ways of thinking and feeling and behaving, which may be right enough in themselves when we recognise them for what they are, but which may be harmful in coming to be accepted as any integral part of the faith itself. Relative differences are accepted as absolute, and operate with the force of dogma. The association operates both ways. A local and particular church may begin largely as the self-assertion of a people or of a group within a people; and once in

existence it may take on more of the characteristics of that group and exaggerate them. To take a simple instance, one may, at particular periods of history, find different religious bodies identified with different political parties within the one commonwealth, or different social interests. When we find such a situation, what is to be done about it? We must assume that the truth is one, and that on clear differences of dogma, if one view is right, then the other must be wrong. I think that by abstracting, on the other hand, from the racial and social differences between communions, we give our discussions on the subject of reunion an appearance of unreality. Too often, they seem to me to be conducted as if they were political negotiations, in which the goal of effort was to find a formula, and let a common name cloak the old differences. The problem for us is not one of legislating ourselves together, but that of the slow process of growing together.

I would not, however, be thought to be elevating the sociological and psychological aspect of religious differences into a problem more important than those of faith and order. To do that would be far worse than to ignore this aspect altogether. I only want it to receive due attention, so that it shall not confuse discussions of faith and order by surreptitious and unconscious participation. And what I call the sociological problem is related to another which I am not sure receives enough attention: the historical problem. The historical problem has a particular pertinence to any conference on life and work. Reformed Churches have begun with assumptions about the relation of Church and State which are perhaps more transitory than they appeared to be in the sixteenth or seventeenth centuries – assumptions about the Christian Commonwealth or the Christian Prince; and which are perhaps not applicable to the situation in which the churches find themselves at the present day.

I suggest that re-union and also common action, is not simply a matter of theology, but is through theology a matter of what, in psychological jargon, may be called a re-integration of group personalities – though not a re-formation into monotonous identity. And I suggest that without this re-integration, agreement and common action in social matters can only be partial and occasional; though on the other hand the common consent and cooperation, when and where occasion makes them possible, may tend to create a disposition towards unity which will go far towards cancelling those differences which are not of fundamental dogma. Common action, in matters of social justice, need not wait upon re-union: but at the same time we must keep clearly in mind that the problem is truly a theological

problem. Christian sociology is not an affair simply for people who happen to be practicing Christians and are also sociologists: it is a department of theology. I make this assertion partly in order to admit my own lack of qualification.

I am concerned with the question of re-union because it has a direct bearing upon the problems denoted by our phrase "Life and Work." We must confess that in a separated Christianity common judgment and common action can be no more than occasional, ad hoc: we have to wait on the event. A local Church is weak in its own country, and can speak with but feeble authority about the affairs of other countries. Because I am a layman, and because I am not a theologian, I feel that the best I can do in an assembly like this is to plead for more theology. There must be many like myself, who feel the daily strain of refusing to yield ourselves to the insistent claims of one extreme secular philosophy or another; while we see sadly that others succeed in freeing themselves from this strain by surrendering and identifying their Christian faith with the collective belief of some secular group. Where we hear fundamental principles clearly enunciated, we often fail to hear the explicit pronouncement upon the particular act; and where we hear the explicit pronouncement upon the particular act, we are not always sure of the theological foundations. It seems to me that we are a long way from common agreement about the relation of the Church to the World.[3] At this point I should like to quote from an Editorial in the current number of "Christendom," which seems to me to cover admirably the main possibilities of difference:

> Within the non-catholic compass of the sphere of discussion at least three main trends may be discerned. In the first the complete autonomy of the social order is insisted upon. This is held both by those who regard it as completely "under sin," and also by those who, at the opposite pole, believe it to be under the "natural goodness of human nature." A second view holds that the moral precepts of the Bible can be applied directly in the here and now. In some cases this leads its adherents into one side of the class struggle, or into pacifism. In other cases to planning on evolutionary lines. The third attitude assumes that all social patterns are temporary; there is no specific Christian system, and certainly no Kingdom of God on earth. Christians must attack evils where they see them in contradiction to the Divine Imperative. This view may lead its believers, too, into one side or other of the secular battles of our time.

> In contrast to these three attitudes which together make up the Protestant perspectives stands the Catholic doctrine of a Natural Law, to which societies can approximate or from which they can depart so as to make the moral claim upon men either direct or confused.[4]

The problem of the Law of Nature seems to me to be one of the most important of those with which we can be concerned, and of those most easily overlooked. I do not feel sure that all who have expressed their views in the recent discussions of Marriage Law have been aware that there was such a problem. Christian thinkers may deny that there is a Law of Nature, but they do not always seem aware that there is such a theory, to be denied. Thus a serious Christian meditating upon the condition of the Christian in the World has been able to say:

> A company, through its board of directors, may do things "in the interests of its shareholders" (for it has power to select only particular interests, that is, their financial interests) which the individuals or many of them would not do individually. They may be things which do not square with the interests of the community taken as a whole – such large generalizations are not its business.[5]

Such a view seems to me – who am no theologian, and I therefore put forward merely the query – to ignore the existence, or even the theory, of a Law of Nature, and to open the way to the view of the State as something above morality. I do not know. I merely point to a question which I should like to see discussed, and the discussion of which will occupy, I think, more than the life of the present conference.

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. W. A. Visser 't Hooft and J. H. Oldham, *The Church and its Function in Society* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1937), an ecumenical study-book published in English, French, and German for the purpose of preparing delegates for the conference. In the pages that TSE gives for his discussion, Visser 't Hooft (1900-85), General Secretary of the World's Student Christian Association, asks if there can be a "Church in the Churches," given the variety of doctrinal and historical backgrounds of the participating Christian Churches, and answers that the Churches are "obliged to recognize the fact of our *disagreement* as to the *nature* of the Church as well as the fact of our *agreement* as to the *reality* of the Church. This means, not that we should cease to work for unity, but that we should cease to try to force the issue of unity" (94-95). In his part of the book, Oldham, chairman of the Research Commission of the Universal Christian

Council, discusses the service of the Church in the social and political spheres, with attention to problems raised by the new totalitarian doctrines of the state.

2. TSE refers to two independent ecumenical Christian movements involved in the conference: the World Conference on Faith and Order, dedicated to the ultimate reunion of the Churches and to removing obstacles that hinder unity, and the Universal Christian Conference on Life and Work, dedicated to harmonizing the Protestant and Orthodox churches' view of the Church Universal's function in the world. Both movements were later incorporated into the World Council of Churches: Life and Order in 1938, Faith and Order in 1948.

3. See TSE's "The Church's Message to the World" (5.424).

4. "Editorial: Church, Community and State," *Christendom* (June 1937), [83]-86, signed by "V. A. D." (Vigo Auguste Demant).

5. Sir Josiah Stamp, *Motive and Method in a Christian Order* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1936), 37.

TEXTUAL NOTE

1. The seven-page typescript (carbon, n. p., n. d.) with TSE's holograph corrections is in the Houghton Library: bMS Am 1691 (31).

A Commentary

The Criterion: A Literary Review, 16 (July 1937) 666-70

The death of Paul Elmer More passed almost unnoticed in this country, where his writings have never been widely known.[1] Yet he was one of two Americans of his generation, more distinguished and important critics than any who survive them in that country, and than any of their own time in England. That More and Irving Babbitt, the most cosmopolitan American writers of their period (Babbitt was French, More was English in his sympathies), should be so little known outside of their own country is curious: and their lives have some bearing on the question of the relation of a critic to his own time.

The most influential literary critics of the past in England – there are not very many of them – have been men who were themselves practitioners of the arts of writing that they criticized, and were definitely in the literary movement of their time. The nearest analogy to More and Babbitt is of course Ste.-Beuve, whom they both admired and studied closely. But Ste.-Beuve, in spite of the failure of his fiction and verse to make any impression upon the course of events, was in contact with a life of letters and ideas in Paris which was active and creative; and furthermore, in his weakness as well as his strength, is a very representative man of his time.[2] One is struck by the isolation of Babbitt and More. That they were not representative cannot be attributed to them as a defect: because anything in America that there was to be "represented" could only have been represented by smaller men. But the artist of genius has the opportunity of creating that which he will represent, however isolated he may be in his beginnings, or however isolated in spirit he may remain to the end. The critic who is, so to speak, a greater critic than his age deserves, is isolated in a much more cruel way: for he remains in his own time ineffective.

It may be contended that Babbitt has had considerable influence. That he has influenced very deeply a number of scattered individuals I know well; but time must pass before we can estimate how much difference this influence will have made. The more spectacular welcome given to his teaching in America seems to me to have been of a not very intelligent kind. His doctrines were taken up by people who wanted a positive, cut-and-dried

"humanism," who received them in a dead or sterile form, who wished to maintain the Liberal compromise between Christianity and communism.[3] The living part of his teaching, the profound analysis of the modern world, does not appear to have reached many people capable of prolonging his inspiration into creative activity of their own. That Babbitt, like More, failed to make an immediate impression upon a whole generation is anything but "failure" in the ordinary sense. A great creative artist, once he is dead, may have no more influence upon posterity than More and Babbitt had upon their own time: that is to say, he may influence a few people here and there in every generation; but unfortunately, the influence that a man has at his own time does count, justly or unjustly, in forming his subsequent reputation, and there is nothing to be done about it.

When More was writing his earlier *Shelburne Essays* the literary world of America was as dead as a door-nail: he knew that perfectly well. The literary world of England was perhaps a small affair; More was remote and unknown, but he was not the sort of man who could have influenced it had he been among it. People are only influenced in the direction in which they want to go, and influence consists largely in making them conscious of their wishes to proceed in that direction. Walter Pater ruled from the grave, and his living representative was Arthur Symons. I should say myself that More was a better critic than Pater; and I do not think it can be denied that he was of very much larger size than Arthur Symons. It was because of being of larger size that he would not have fitted. What More wrote of Ernest Dowson and Lionel Johnson, when these men were contemporary poets, remains surprisingly fresh. We should expect him to have recognized their weaknesses, but we are astonished on re-reading his essay to find how justly he appreciated their merits. But I remember that when (some years later) I arrived at the age at which one begins to attend to criticism, it was the work of Symons and not that of More to which I turned.[4] It is no use offering anyone something large when something smaller is what they want.

The period which may be said to have begun about 1910 had its own critical requirements, which were not those of a general assessment of the literature of the past. What was needed was a critical activity to revivify creative writing, to introduce new material and new technique from other countries and other times. The accomplishment of the Imagist movement in verse seems to me, in retrospect, to have been critical rather than creative; and as criticism, very important. I am not thinking only of such work

as Mr. Flint's studies of contemporary French poetry, of the importation of the views of Remy de Gourmont, or even of the more philosophical theories of T. E. Hulme as expressed in his conversation (for his influence in print belongs to a later period); but also of the Imagist poetry itself, of which only a small residue is now readable. The only poet and critic who survived Imagism to develop in a larger way was Mr. Pound, who, as literary critic alone, has been probably the greatest literary influence of this century up to the present time. The central importance of Mr. Pound's criticism has not yet been fully recognized. The most recent period, up to the present day, seems to be one of a less lively interest in the actual problems of good writing, and has been more concerned with aesthetics in general and with psychology. For this period, the psychological subtleties of Mr. I. A. Richards, and the more general and increasingly political aesthetics of Mr. Read, seem to provide what is desired.[5] The danger I foresee for the next period is in a negligence of the problem of "how to write" – such that the creative writers may become insufficiently critical of their own workmanship, and the critical writers absorbed in problems which are not literary at all.

It would seem that the practical value of critical writing depends more immediately and obviously upon an element of journalism than does creative writing. This is not to say that creative writing also is not partly journalistic; it is only to suggest that effective criticism may demand a more conscious recognition of the contemporary situation. For Paul More, in America, there was, throughout the first part of his active life, no situation at all; and, as I have indicated above, his ineffectiveness in England was not essentially due to distance and to being unknown and out of touch: he would have been ineffective anyway because of having standards superior to those of the artists who were there to criticize. He had not the creative gift which alone could have given reality to his standards. It was not until towards the end of his life that he attained actuality, and that in another field. The five volumes of that great work, *The Greek Tradition*, establish More as a contemporary theologian; and in future it will be through *The Greek Tradition* that a few readers will always be drawn to examine the wisdom contained in the many volumes of *Shelburne Essays*.

Whatever one's opinion, at one time or another, of our Foreign Policy, it sometimes seems as if many Englishmen, as private individuals, were disposed to make any intelligent policy difficult. I wonder whether any people, except that of the United States of America, is so given to votes of

moral censure upon other nations. This thought was inspired by Mr. Edmund Blunden's admirable letter in *The Times* of April 4, on the subject of the bicentenary celebration of the University of Göttingen.[6] It seems hardly credible, at the moment of writing, that the motive of the authorities of Oxford University in deciding not to send representatives to that celebration could have been to express disapproval of the German Government. But it is to be feared that their action may be so interpreted in Germany, and (pending an explanation) may be so interpreted here too. There are no doubt many individuals who, from the most generous motives, would like to see such disapproval expressed in every possible public way – without any discrimination between what is permissible to individuals and what is permissible to governments and public institutions. There are also persons who, in public positions, are inclined to behave as if they were private individuals. It may be that the effect of this "idealism," as it is called, tends to exaggerate the silly cynicism (called "realism") of certain foreign speakers and writers, even driving them to express their fury in billingsgate.[7] The situation in Spain has provided the perfect opportunity for extremists of both extremes. To turn from the shrill manifestoes of the Extreme Left, and the indiscretions of the Dean of Canterbury, to the affirmations of Mr. Jerrold and Mr. Lunn, is only to intensify the nightmare.[8] On the First of May *The Tablet* provided its explanation of the destruction of Guernica: the most likely culprits, according to *The Tablet*, were the Basques' own allies, their shady friends in Catalonia.[9]

I have to thank a number of correspondents who have written about the origin of the Japanese Tale published in our last number in a version given by Miss Myfanwy Evans. With the exception of one writer who believes that there is some similar tale in Irish folklore, all gave the same source: a story called "Mujina" in Lafcadio Hearn's *Kwaidan*.[10]

T. S. E.

NOTES

1. See TSE's "Paul Elmer More" (with similar references), published in the *Princeton Alumni Weekly* on 5 Feb 1937, prior to More's death on 9 Mar (5.418).

2. TSE discusses Sainte-Beuve and his "great book" *Port-Royal* in "The *Pensées* of Pascal" (1931) (4.341-42) and in his *Criterion* "Commentary" of July 1931 (4.308). He first studied Sainte-Beuve in Babbitt's 1909-10 Harvard course on literary criticism in France, the substance of which was embodied in Babbitt's *The Masters of Modern French Criticism* (1912), including two major chapters on Sainte-Beuve.

3. See TSE's "The Humanism of Irving Babbitt" (1928) (3.454) and "Second Thoughts about Humanism" (1929) (3.614).

4. In 1908, TSE read the American edition of Symons's *The Symbolist Movement in Literature*, which included Laforgue, Nerval, and others; the third edition, published in 1919, included Baudelaire.

5. TSE alludes to two works co-authored by Richards and C. K. Ogden, *The Foundations of Aesthetics* (1922) and *The Meaning of Meaning* (1923), in which they explore the principles of aesthetic reception and their dependence on the psychological theories that inform Richards's literary interpretations in such works as *The Principles of Literary Criticism* (1924) and *Practical Criticism: A Study of Literary Judgment* (1929), and to Herbert Read's *Form in Modern Poetry* (1932), in which he distinguishes between abstract and organic form, favoring the latter as central to his theory of anarchism in essays eventually collected in *To Hell with Culture, and Other Essays on Art and Society* (1963).

6. In fact, Blunden's letter, dated 29 Apr, was published in the *Times* of 1 May under the heading "The Göttingen Celebrations / Oxford's Abstention" (12), written shortly after he lectured in Göttingen: "It is to be wished that more of us could see German universities at this moment as they are. The actual state of affairs at Göttingen is that of a great and spirited university going about its work in a normal temper. . . . To mention a slight but real indication, in lecturing there I was allowed absolute freedom, was accorded the fullest attention . . . and found a generous atmosphere of discussion. . . . At Göttingen, as elsewhere in Germany, one meets with respect, admiration, affection for England. The tradition is old and has endured remarkably. But what will our aloofness, our contumacy, do to it if we persist?"

7. billingsgate: coarsely abusive language (with reference to London's Billingsgate fish market).

8. The Dean of Canterbury, Hewlett Johnson (1874-1966), known as "The Red Dean" for his support of Stalin and Soviet communism, led an eight-man mission to Spain in Mar in open support of the communist-supported Republicans against Franco. After deploring the anticlerical atrocities of the Nationalists and General Queipo de Llano, he wrote in the *Times* of 5 May that the General "cannot complain if, after seeing with my own eyes the Franco bombardment of Durango and after entering the city to find that among the many nuns slain was the sister of my chauffeur, I was so filled with indignation at his broadcast charge that the nunnery and the church had been burnt down by the 'Reds' that I seized the opportunity upon my return to Bilbao of speaking of the things I had seen and refuting a mean and terrible slander" (12). Following further negative publicity about the mission, the Dean was formally rebuked by the Archbishop of Canterbury before the Summer Session of the Church Assembly, as reported in the *Times* of 24 June under "Archbishop and Dean": "'I ought . . . to add that, while I respect the Dean's conscientious convictions and aims, I have expressed to him my own regret that he should have brought into the arena of acute political controversy the name of the Cathedral Church of Canterbury, with the special and worldwide associations which surround that name.' The Archbishop's statement was greeted with loud applause" (11).

Douglas Jerrold (1893-1964), who had published several of TSE's reviews as editor of *The English Review* in 1931, had personally helped arrange for Franco's flight from the Canary Islands to Spanish Morocco in July 1936, prior to the military coup that started the Spanish Civil War. Jerrold wrote of his visit to Spain and his strong support of Franco in the *Times* of 22 Mar 1937 (18) and 3 Apr (8).

Sir Arnold Lunn (1888-1974), a writer, mountaineer, and staunch agnostic who converted to Catholicism at age forty-five, was also a dedicated supporter of Franco's Nationalists, a member of the pro-Franco Friends of National Spain, and the author of numerous anti-Republican articles for the English press.

9. In fact, the 26 Apr bombing of Guernica, the center of Basque tradition and culture, was carried out by German and Italian bombers at the order of General Franco to support the Nationalist Party, which falsely claimed that the town was burned and dynamited by fleeing Republican forces from Republican-held areas such as Catalonia. The English Catholic paper *The Tablet*, which supported Franco and the Nationalist insurgency against the Republicans ("Godless Marxists") from the beginning of the war, ventured to report on "The Destruction of Guernica" on the front page of its issue of 1 May, describing the Basques as "a fiery minority, and they and their Anarchist and Communist allies have continually to find ways of stiffening the military resistance of the general population. . . . The enemies of Nationalist Spain in Great Britain immediately jumped to the conclusion that here was the savagery they are always expecting. . . . It is certainly true that the Basque Government is in unhappy alliance with people [Republican forces against Franco] to whom the lives of hundreds, or even thousands of Basques, are indifferent, and who know that their best chance now is, at all costs, to rouse outside public opinion in order to secure not less, but more intervention. These matters still await elucidation" (1).

10. TSE printed "A Japanese Tale" in the *Criterion* of Apr 1937 (468), asking interested readers to throw light on the source of the story, written down from memory on a single page by the Welsh art critic and opera librettist Myfanwy Evans (1911-37). She describes a young man who meets a weeping girl in the forest. When he questions her weeping, she passes her hand across her face, which becomes as smooth as the wall of an egg. Terrified that he is in the presence of a demon, he flees until he encounters a charcoal-burner, to whom he tells his fearsome story. The charcoal-burner then passes his hand over his face, which becomes as smooth as the wall of an egg. The story is indeed similar to "Mujina" in *Kwaidan: Stories and Studies of Strange Things* (1904), a collection of ghost stories by the writer and translator Lafcadio (sometimes spelled Lafacadio) Hearn (1850-1904), who moved to Japan in 1890 and later became a Japanese citizen. TSE only summarized the correspondence from the respondents; he did not publish any of the letters in the *Criterion*.

Report of a Speech Day address at the Kingswood School

The Kingswood Magazine, 25.3 (July 1937) 86-89

TSE was invited in Jan 1937 by Headmaster Alfred Barrett Sackett (1895-1977) to give the annual Speech Day address at the Kingswood School in Bath, founded by John Wesley in 1748. On 28 Apr he informed Geoffrey Faber that he was going up on 24 June as one of the speakers "to give the Prize Day Address at Kingswood (Methodist) School and that will be great fun." His speech on 25 June was the first of four Prize Day addresses given at Methodist schools, including two the following year at schools in Truro (5.623) and Penzance (5.630). On 25 Oct 1942 he informed Polly Tandy that his next Prize Day engagement was "at another Methodist School in Suffolk [Bury St. Edmunds], that makes my fourth Methodist school; this is getting a bit too oecumenical." TSE's Kingswood script does not survive; he may have left it with the Kingswood reporter for the quotations, as he did on other such occasions. This appears to be TSE's first school event since he gave the graduation address at his former school, the Milton Academy, near Boston, in June 1933 (4.817).[1]

In welcoming Mr. Eliot, the Headmaster spoke of the eagerness, perhaps a trifle indiscreet, with which the upper part of the school looked forward to his coming. Many people owed a lot to Mr. Eliot for "his refusal to divorce poetry from religion," and for his efforts to link again poetry and the stage. [. . .][2]

The reception which greeted Mr. Eliot was eloquent of "the uncommon, if rather indiscreet eagerness" referred to by the Headmaster. Remembering his own Speech Days, he felt sure that then, as now, boys had far more important things to think about than speeches, however edifying. "The only thing I can do in these circumstances is to talk to myself. There is a certain human willingness for people to listen to things they are not intended to hear, when they frequently will not listen to what they are meant to hear. There are some occasions, like this, when a case can be made out for a man talking to himself."

Becoming more serious, Mr. Eliot, looking back, spoke of "a strong feeling for the mystery of life." "I am aware of many good intentions, many of which came to nothing, and of mistakes, some of which led to good. But I am aware of very little conscious design. It seems to me that I have had very little to do with the shaping of my own life, and looking back, I am very

much less certain now than I was then that I know the meaning of the word success." Though success could be achieved in an isolated act, a successful life is a very different matter, for "in whatever thing you are successful you have to go on living after that."

His reaction to his own work was either fright that he would never write anything as good again, or fear that everything he had written was bad. Thus, practically always dissatisfied, he was kept going by the hope of eventually doing something greater than before. "Yet I would not have it otherwise. I should not want to have any illusions that I was a great poet. The happiest state is not worrying whether it is good or bad, because one will never know. We cannot set out to be great artists, scientists or anything else, we can only follow the line to which we seem to be impelled."

People could be abstractly divided into three classes: the "conventional" people, who achieved nothing of distinction because of limited opportunities or easy circumstances, those, perhaps fortunate, who from an early age displayed one particular talent, and lastly a large class, in which he included himself, "whose temperament is less settled and who take a long time to find out what they are to do. We all have in us a little of each of these classes. We are all more or less conventional. Convention, we come to find, is not so much how we behave, but why we behave in such a way. We sometimes find that when we think we have been most unconventional, we have been more conventional than ever, because we have merely been accepting the prejudices of a new group of people instead of those of the old group. Nobody can hope in a life-time to attain complete indifference of word, thought and action. One can only hope to go on developing, and for myself my ambition is to be able to say, when I am seventy-five – 'What a silly youth I was when I was only seventy!'"

He had found out that the process of discovering what one has to do in life was the process of knowing oneself, a process which was not very pleasant, and resulted in many mistakes, but "the only mistakes terrible to contemplate are those from which people learn nothing."

Mr. Eliot lastly spoke of "another element in this mysterious pattern of one's life." Looking back on the development of his own life, he could not help a feeling of humility "that there had been some element in operation of a mysterious Divine Grace. I should not like to localize this too closely, and I don't think of it as something particularly vouchsafed to myself, but rather as something there for everyone. It is a feeling which is both frightening and reassuring. It is never something I am conscious of at the time

but only in retrospect. I am not talking of theology but of experience. The way in which this affects my attitude to the future is this – this kind of grace seems to me something which I can only hope to receive at particular moments when I need it, if I am seeking for it with my real and total self – and seeking it unconsciously rather than consciously the whole time."

"The only way in which I can bring this real self of mine to approach God is through prayer and meditation, not as a rite to be repeated, but as something which one hopes to understand better year by year, so that in a sense one's whole life is a process of learning to pray."

The real sincerity and deep thinking behind this speech, its ease of presentation and pervasive wit, greatly impressed Mr. Eliot's hearers, and it was a speech which will be very hard to forget.[3]

NOTES

1. The accounts of Headmaster Sackett's introduction and TSE's speech were preceded by a report of preliminary events and announcements, beginning with a sermon by the Rev. C. Ryder Smith (1875-1956), a Methodist minister, Biblical scholar, theology tutor at Wesleyan College, Richmond, and author of *The Christian Experience: A Study in the Theology of Fellowship* (1926). The author of the magazine article begins:

"Speech day was held on Friday, June 25th. At the service held in chapel before the speeches, the School Visitor, Dr. C. Ryder Smith, preached on '*Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth*' (Matthew 5:5). He showed that meekness is not a weak quality, for God himself is meek, in that he controls his strength. It is one of the supreme qualities of a Christian gentleman. At present it does not seem as if it were the meek who inherit the earth; yet in the long run it is they who most greatly influence the course of history.

"After the service the guests and the school made their way to the Moulton Hall for the speeches. In making his report the Headmaster first spoke of the danger that the reading of English should relapse into 'airy dilettantism.' He welcomed the attempt being made at Cambridge 'to produce men of a kind to become specialist English teachers in public and secondary schools,' and the more intelligent School Certificate English paper which is being set from Cambridge to the Upper Fifth Classical this year. Referring to the problems connected with Methodist Union, he made it clear that sons of ministers from all three sections of the Methodist Church were to be admitted on equal terms. He also refuted the suggestion that Kingswood was too expensive for some minister's sons, stating that no minister's son who could pass the qualifying examination had been refused in the last nine or ten years and that in cases of real difficulty special consideration was given" (87).

2. The paragraph that follows this introduction continues the summary of the day's activities and appears before the report on TSE's speech: "The Senior Prefect, E. C. Penna, surveying the multitudinous activities of a school year, gave pride of place to the winning of nine open Scholarships at Oxford and Cambridge. He mentioned also our unbeaten 1st XV, the excellent performance of the Athletic team in the Public School sports, and the visit of a party of Sixth-formers to the German National Political School at Ilfeld" (87).

3. TSE left Kingswood after tea. The report concluded with the following paragraph:

"After the Speeches the visitors, this year without umbrellas, went to the marquee for tea, after which a scene from Molière's *Le Malade imaginaire*, and two ballad-mimes 'Hynd Horn' and 'Sir Eglamore' were presented in the Headmaster's garden. There was also an exhibition of Wesleyana and other old books in the Library, of great interest both from a Methodist and a typographical point of view. Mr. William Parsons was the soloist at the concert in the evening" (89).

The Oxford Conference [I][1]

To the Editor of *The Church Times*

The Church Times, 118 (6 Aug 1937) 130

Sir, – May I be permitted, as a delegate to the recent Conference on Church, Community and State, to offer a brief postscript to your leading article of last week?[2] I do not wish to make any extended criticism until the printed reports of the sections are available and until the reports of the Conference on Faith and Order are available.[3] But at the moment the following two points seem to be pertinent.

1. Was the Conference "representative"? That depends on what one thinks ought to be represented. Of the full delegates, the number of whom was, I believe, supposed to be four hundred, the Church of England had eighteen, of whom I was one. The Church of Wales and the Episcopal Church of Scotland had one delegate each; and the Unitarian Church in England was represented by one delegate. From America, the Methodist Episcopal Church (coloured), the Five Year Meeting of Friends, the Methodist Episcopal Church (African), the Reformed Church in America, and the United Brethren in Christ, were all as fully represented, numerically, as the Church of Wales and the Episcopal Church of Scotland. Of the eighteen full delegates of the Church of England, at most five could be qualified as Catholic. How many delegates of the Episcopal Church in America were Catholic I do not know, as all the names were unknown to me.

2. Did the Conference arrive at any "unity"? It is impossible for such a Conference to arrive at any unity. There were far too many delegates – far too many Americans, some of whom did not strike me as having any theological qualifications whatever.[4] The report of the section with which I was associated was prepared by a small number of delegates chosen because of their intelligence and vigour, irrespective of proportional representation or theological views, and the section as a whole was expected to accept it. I do not know of any other method by which it would have been possible to prepare a report at all.

I was only present throughout the first week of the fortnight. What made that week valuable to me is this, that it made me much more clearly

aware of the profundity of the differences between Christians. The official languages were English, French, and German. But these linguistic divisions were trifling compared to the differences of languages even between those who spoke the same language. I for one learned a greater respect, though no greater liking, for the Orthodox and Lutheran theologies. I wish I could say the same about American Protestantism. I conclude that the Conference will have done much good if it makes these fundamental differences clearer; and conversely only harm if it serves to obscure them.

T. S. ELIOT

24, RUSSELL SQUARE, LONDON, W.C. 1

NOTES

1. This letter and the next follow TSE's participation as a delegate and speaker at the World Conference of Churches held in Oxford from 12 to 26 July. See the headnote to TSE's address, "The Church as an Ecumenical Society" (5.497).

2. *The Church Times* of 30 July devoted a full page to the section reports of the Conference, beginning with TSE's section on "Economic Order." TSE was a member of the committee that prepared the unsigned report, which was presented on 20 July by the chairman. It outlined several economic injustices that have given rise in capitalist countries "to such anti-religious political movements as Communism" and urged Christians "to acknowledge with contrition the gap which, largely through their own blindness, extends between the Church and the radical movements aiming at social justice. Indeed, the Church must recognize her contribution to the economic evils of the age through such sins as her too close alliance with the privileged classes, her disunion, and her preoccupation with lesser tasks." It proceeds to sound a "call to Christian action, within the economic order as it is . . . and in criticism of the economic order, by realizing the duty to test every economic and political institution in the light of our understanding of God's will." The report closes "with a strong plea that the Church should set her own house in order, particularly in her capacity as an owner of property and an employer of labour" (108).

Under the heading "Economic Order Criticized," the *Times* of 21 July featured the report, quoting its introductory note: "The Conference will be asked to commend the report to the Churches as the best statement of the mind of the Conference at which it was possible to arrive in the time at the disposal of the Conference. The general tendency of the report is to criticize drastically, if not altogether condemn, the existing economic order, but it refrains from proposing any concrete alternative system. It provides in detail much material for challenge by members of the Conference" (9). The revised and expanded report was published in *The Churches Survey their Task: The Report of the Conference at Oxford, July 1937, on Church, Community, and State* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1937), [87]-129.

3. Following its participation in the Oxford Conference, the Conference on Faith and Order held its separate Second World Conference in Edinburgh, 3-18 Aug.

4. TSE later wrote of the Conference proceedings to the Rev. Reginald Tribe, Director of the Society of the Sacred Mission, Kelham, on 17 June 1938: "I do not want to appear to take a

wholly gloomy view, because I think that a good deal might be accomplished more slowly by meetings of select groups from selected churches. I annoyed some of my American friends by saying, in a letter to *The Church Times*, that there were too many Americans: I thought at the time that I was perhaps in a better position to put this unpleasant fact than anybody else. But it might be put differently by saying that too many bodies were represented, some of which did not seem to have any living theology at all."

The Oxford Conference [II]

To the Editor of *The Church Times*

The Church Times, 118 (20 Aug 1937) 184[1]

Sir, – Having been away in a rather remote part of the country, I have only just seen your issue of August 6, and apologize for the following comment being a week overdue.

In your first leading article you say, "Mr. Eliot points out that the Life and Work Conference was dominated by American Protestants."[2] This is not quite what I was trying to convey. I said that there were too many Americans (indeed I think that there were too many delegates altogether), but this is not the same thing. So far as I was aware, the few Americans who could be called "dominant" owed their position, like the representatives of other countries, to their individual abilities; the Conference was very much in debt to Professor Reinhold Niebuhr, among others.[3] But the policy of statesmen has to be shaped according to the temper of the majority of the people whom they have to rule. What I fear for such assemblies in the future is the insensible influence of the mass; and there appeared to be a larger mass of American liberal Protestantism than of anything else. I doubt whether a Conference can be "oecumenical" and at the same time "democratic."

T. S. ELIOT

24, RUSSELL SQUARE, W.C. 1

NOTES

1. The CC is dated 16 Aug 1937, written on return from a week's holiday with Geoffrey and Enid Faber in Gwent, Wales.

2. The editorial in the *Church Times* of 6 Aug addressed TSE's letter published in the same issue (5.514): "Mr. Eliot points out that the Life and Work Conference was dominated by American Protestantism. The Coloured Methodist Episcopal Church and the United Brethren in Christ had exactly the same representation as the Church of Wales and the Episcopal Church of Scotland. Of the four hundred delegates, the Church of England had only eighteen, and of these 'at most five could be qualified as Catholic.' It seems to us obvious that to describe a body of this sort as 'oecumenical' is such a misuse of terms as to lead to misunderstanding and illusion. It is a good thing, as Mr. Eliot says, that we should have a closer understanding and a keener appreciation of the members of other Christian communities. But it is an evil thing when fundamental differences are obscured" (136).

3. The American Protestant theologian Reinhold Niebuhr (1892-1971) was a delegate to the Oxford Conference and gave a paper titled "The Church Faces a Secular Culture" on 13 July. Moreover, W. A. Visser 't Hooft and J. H. Oldham drew upon Niebuhr's works in introducing the conception behind the Conference in *The Church and its Function in Society*, specifically Niebuhr's article on "The Secular and the Religious" in *The Christian Century* of 4 Nov 1936, and his *Doom and Dawn* (1936). Visser 't Hooft and Oldham were also given access to Niebuhr's essay on "Christian Faith and the Common Life" before its publication in *The Christian Faith and the Common Life*, eds. Nils Ehrenstrom, M. G. Dibelius, et al. (1938), one of seven books related to the Conference themes.

Religious Drama: Mediaeval and Modern[1]*

University of Edinburgh Journal, 9 (Autumn 1937) 8-17

When we speak of "religious plays," we inevitably have in mind *Everyman*, and the various cycles of plays, such as those of York, Beverley, Wakefield, Coventry and Chester,[2] which flourished in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries and lingered on through the time of the Tudors. These plays give us a kind of standard by which we measure anything that we write and produce now – however far we depart from the aims and methods of the older drama. The qualification is important. For this standard of the mediaeval plays may be applied in an undesirable way. We are apt to think of the Middle Ages as having been somehow specially favoured in the way of their mode of life, their religious stability, and their atmosphere of faith and devotion; and we start with a feeling of discouragement and timidity that is fatal to the production of anything new. I suspect that, for the most part, people still tend to regard the performance of a religious play as something to be attended, like a bazaar or a jumble sale, from a sense of duty rather than for the purpose of enjoyment. You may even feel that you have fulfilled your duty if you buy tickets and manage to give them away to somebody who will go in your place. You may even think of them as you may think of pageants – as performances which give a great deal more pleasure to the people taking part in them (especially if the costumes are interesting) than to the audience. It is to combat this feeling that I find an understanding of the right relation between contemporary and mediaeval religious drama, and between contemporary religious and secular plays, to be helpful.

To begin with, there is one reason for trying to create modern religious plays for modern times, that may not have struck you. I once said in a different context, and speaking not about the drama but about poetry, that a people which lost the ability to produce poetry would gradually lose its appreciation of what it had written in the past. Our attitude towards a dead art is very different from our attitude towards one which is still living. It is not necessary that what we make for ourselves should be better than what our ancestors made for us, or even as good: but if we cease to make we cease to understand. We acquire the wrong kind of respect for what has been done in the past, by the awareness of our own impotence to do anything.

We become excessively time-conscious. I think one is always struck, in reading a play like the Wakefield *Second Shepherds' Nativity Play*, by the fact that for the people who played it the passage of time made very little difference. They cared little about anachronisms, and a great deal about the permanent elements of humanity. We, on the other hand, are far more aware of these people as living in the fifteenth century, than they were of the much longer gap of time between themselves and the actions they were representing. We perform the play in a closed theatre with scenery, instead of on top of a cart in the high street; and we tend to construct the scenery in terms of a fresco of Giotto,[3] if not of the more opulent costume of some later period of Italian painting. We get a very pretty piece of pageantry, at the expense of the essential emotion of religious drama or of any drama. And if we want a living religious drama we must be prepared to accept something less sedative, and perhaps something which may cause us some discomfort and embarrassment in the process of getting used to it. In our way of enjoying mediaeval religious plays – I am speaking now of the part of the audience rather than that of the producer – we avoid any direct emotion. We have a pretty spectacle; and so far as we feel religious emotion, it is rather a faint revival of the form of feeling of five hundred years ago than something directly our own.

A good deal too much has been said in general about "ages of faith": as if faith were fundamentally easier, or more difficult, for people who think as well as feel, in one age than in another. The advantages of the Middle Ages for the creation of religious plays were not, I think, primarily those of a simple faith, and some of them are such as we should not care to pay the price to recapture. As religious drama was the only kind of drama that the Middle Ages had, all their dramatic abilities went into it; and as it was the only kind that the audience could get, the audience could enjoy it in a much more comprehensive way than we can. They got an enjoyment which only an effort of imagination can help us to renew: I suppose that their feeling was a fusion of piety with the excitement of the child's annual Christmas pantomime, and the larking spirit of a bank holiday. They did not have our consciousness that we are attending one kind of play rather than another.

A popular audience will usually accept what is the best of its kind – though it may not recognise that it is the best – when that is the only kind it can get. The developments of high forms of art, in the past, seem to have been facilitated by material limitations. The builders of mediaeval cathedrals were thus fortunate in not having the possibilities of concrete, the

designers and carvers of seventeenth and eighteenth century furniture were fortunate in not having chromium steel to play with, the Greek tragedians were fortunate in not having picture palaces in Athens, Addison and Johnson were fortunate in not having to compete with the *Daily Mirror*.[4] And thus the religious plays of the Middle Ages had the advantage of being entertainment as well as expression of piety.

This brings me back to my point. So long as we simply re-act the mediaeval plays, whether with meticulous attention to historical accuracy, or with extraneous trappings to emphasise their mediaevalism, to make a pretty show, or even in modern dress, we shall not be getting the full value out of them. It is only, I think, by attempting to do something for our time that these plays did for theirs, that we can recover the right attitude towards these old plays. But I do not pretend that the task is easy.

I would go so far as to say that a religious play, to be good, must not be purely religious. If it is, it is simply doing something that the liturgy does better; and the religious play is not a substitute for liturgical observance and ceremonial, but something different. It is a combination of religious with ordinary dramatic interest. I am aware that this assertion cannot be made with equal suitability to all mediaeval religious plays. These plays are not to be thought of as having the uniformity of construction of Elizabethan drama: what is very much the greatest of them, *Everyman*, is in a class by itself. The Cornish mystery of *The Three Maries*[5] is more of a kind of extra-liturgical form; the Wakefield *Nativity* of which I have spoken, or the familiar Chester *Deluge*,[6] illustrate the combination of interests. But in *Everyman* the religious and the dramatic are not merely combined, but wholly fused. Everyman is on the one hand the human soul in extremity, and on the other any man in any dangerous position from which we wonder how he is going to escape – with as keen interest as that with which we wait for the escape of the film hero, bound and helpless in a hut to which his enemies are about to set fire.

It should now be obvious that I have been trying to get to this point: that the creation of a living religious drama in our time is not to be conceived as a problem entirely isolated from that of the secular theatre. I would even ask you to look at it the other way about from the usual, and say, that it is not so much that the Christian Faith needs the drama (for its evangelising possibilities) but that the drama needs the Christian Faith. Just as I would say that what we need is not more religious poetry, but more religion in our poetry.

To sum up to this point: part of the use of contemporary religious drama should be to help us to be able to distinguish between what is specifically religious and what is not, between the essential and the accidental, between the permanent and the period aspect of the old plays. But in the creation of contemporary religious plays we have a new problem, which did not arise in any previous period good enough in this respect to matter. Our problem of writing good religious plays is a part of a general problem of writing good plays. Unless religious drama is going to supplant secular drama, and nobody supposes that it can or even wishes that it should, we cannot expect an improvement in this kind without an improvement in the other. I do not mean that the writing of religious plays has got to wait upon the composition of plays of greater intensity, nobility and dignity for the ordinary stage, because it is quite conceivable that the influence for the improvement of the ordinary stage might come from the religious stage. I do mean that we want, and must have, more than we seemed to want when we first started out to examine the future of specifically religious drama: we want the whole of serious drama to have a religious background and to be informed with religious principles. I do not say that we shall ever get as much as this: but if we keep this ideal in mind we may hope to get nearer to its realisation than if we ignore it.

So far as the stage in general has ever been serious, it has always dealt with moral problems, with problems which in the end required a religious solution – whether this necessity was present to the mind of the author or not. This is obviously true of Greek tragedy. The rise and decline of Greek tragedy, from Aeschylus through Sophocles to Euripides, has always been a commonplace of classification. What has perhaps not so much been insisted upon is that this decline, in Euripides, is not so much a dramatic as a religious decline. I suppose I have the right only to speak of the plays of Euripides that I have read – not very many – but I suspect that what is true of a few is true of all. For the conditions and requirements of his time, Euripides is as adroit as anybody. If his plays are not so good as those of his two predecessors, it is because of a less profound grasp of religious and moral problems; because of a preoccupation with serious, but more superficial issues: and this has made him more congenial to a great part of the later nineteenth century, to the world to which Ibsen and Shaw belong. (Tchechov seems to me a more serious dramatist than Ibsen, in that he at least presents profounder problems, though he may not attempt to solve them.)[7] And the high points of French drama seem to me to be in plays of

deeply religious significance: explicit in the *Polyeucte* of Corneille, and implicit in the *Bérénice* of Racine.[8] And even the plays of Ibsen and Shaw, to which I may have appeared to allude rather slightingly, are at least the most serious plays of their times; and in so being, are religious in so far as they express all the religion or philosophy of which their authors were capable. One may not think much of Shaw's hypothetical "lifeforce," but, in the absence of any better religious view of life, it makes *Man and Superman* a religious play, though religious of a low order.[9]

Now I think that this essentially religious craving is latent in all serious lovers of the drama. It is not true that the craving which has possessed most peoples at most times, for seeing human actions represented with mime and voice, is simply a craving for amusement and distraction. I think that the cinema comes nearer to pure distraction, to "taking our minds off . . ." the things they ought to be on as well as the things they need at times to be taken off from. The picture of an actor is never so serious a thing as that actor present on the stage: the film may be nearer in detail to superficial reality, but is always at a further remove from some deeper reality; and to see a moving picture is nearer to merely participating in a common and impersonal dream. (As, in passing, a good photograph is never so near to reality as a good painted portrait.) The theatre satisfies one form of the desire of human beings to achieve greater dignity and significance than they seem to do in their private or indeed public lives. There is a very profound kind of boredom which is an essential moment in the religious life, the boredom with all living in so far as it has no religious meaning.[10] The capacity for this boredom is latent in everybody, and it can never really be appeased by mere amusement. Just as you cannot satisfy the human desire to be usefully employed – one aspect of which is the desire to be of service and the other the desire to think well of oneself – by giving them useless employment. Penelope would not have gone on weaving and un-weaving unless she had maintained the hope of Ulysses' return.

If, however, a theatre of mere amusement can never satisfy – so that the audiences are always wanting something better, though they may not know it – we must remember that there is an important aspect in which the lowest things are the most necessary. The element of amusement is indispensable; if a play does not amuse people it can do nothing for them. I am obviously using the word "amuse" in a wide sense, and one in which the notion of merriment need not enter. I include distraction, and the holding of people's attention without any effort on their part. A great tragedy can

be a very great strain upon the spectator – but it must be a strain that he feels only after it is all over, not while it is going on. One may say at this point that one test of a good religious play is that it should be able to hold the attention, to arouse the excitement, of people who are not religious as well as of those who are – or, I should prefer to say, of people who are not consciously and practically religious, as well as of those who are. If you have any consciousness of virtue, in sitting through a religious drama, if what you feel at the end is physical fatigue rather than emotional exhaustion, if you have not been as "amused" by it as by what you can get in Shaftesbury Avenue,[11] then so far as you are concerned that play is a failure: though I am not saying that the fault may not be partly yours as well as that of the author and producer and actors.

Now, I hope to become more concrete again towards the end, but just at this point I want leave to generalise a little further. What I am opposing is not merely a division of religious and secular drama into watertight compartments; what I am proposing is not merely that we need to go to a religious play or to a secular play in much the same spirit. It is an opposition to the compartmentalisation of life in general, to the sharp division between our religious and our ordinary life. I know that in the world in which we live this compartmentalisation is constantly being forced upon us. I am not only thinking of certain countries, and of certain tendencies which exist in every country; of the explicit doctrine that religion is for a man's private life, and that his public life belongs to the secular state. The terminus of such a doctrine is of course to put an end to man's private life altogether, for the division cannot be maintained. I am thinking also of the ways in which we have to adapt ourselves, every day, to the compromise of liberalism: to living among, and to maintaining common sympathy and common action (as indeed is duty as well as necessity) [*sic*] with, people who deny or ignore the fundamentals of Christianity. On the one hand we must accept, and on the other we must never accept as a finality, this state of affairs. Merely to conduct our own life among ourselves, as we think right, and to abandon the task of evangelisation, would be abnegation of an essential duty.

So, in a smaller and more particular matter, there would be something wrong about the aim of developing and maintaining a religious drama as something having nothing to do with the ordinary stage. If we became strict Puritans, and abstained from attending any but religious drama, we should be wrongly cutting ourselves off from the life of the world; if we determined merely to preserve in ourselves two attitudes, one for cathedral

drama and the other for the West End, we should be dividing our own minds unjustifiably and with bad results. We need to strive towards a kind of *reintegration* of both kinds of drama, just as we need to strive towards a reintegration of life. And we can work for this as spectators and auditors, as critics in the widest sense, as well as when we are authors or producers or actors.

When I say "reintegration" I do not want to be taken to mean "simplification." We do not want to get back to the state of mind of the village or cathedral-town audience of the later Middle Ages, for whom the religious play provided everything simply because it was the only kind of play they had. There is the difference between the development of a simple organism into a more complex one, and a development which is not organic, but a development of parts each of which functions on its own and does not serve the others. A great deal of our development in the modern centuries has been of the latter kind, and a large part of our failure has been the failure to control, for the purposes of living, the mechanical world (mechanical in the largest sense, including our systems of production, distribution and finance) which has sprung up everywhere almost of itself. I do not suggest that we are "more conscious" than our ancestors of five hundred years ago, but we have more to be conscious of. A great deal of this may be trifling, but it is there and has to be taken account of, just as obstacles in one's path have to be taken account of. And among many others, our dramatic consciousness has a great deal more furniture in it.

While, therefore, I should like to dissipate the artificial distinction between religious and secular drama, I think this can best be done if at the same time we maintain clear practical distinctions of subject-matter and treatment for different places and occasions. I have not been arguing that the repertory of the West End and that of the cathedral close should be interchangeable. We need a good many more good religious plays – using "religious" here in the sense of plays suitable primarily for religious places and religious occasions. And among these are different kinds. First, there should be plays appropriate to the greater feasts of the Christian Year, suitable for performance in the environment of a cathedral. Second, there should be plays dealing, with greater or less addition and invention, with other events in the Old Testament or from the Lives of the Saints.[12] And beyond these, plays dealing with situations of life in the world, in an explicitly Christian way. It is obvious that there is an indefinite gradation between the plays suitable only for presentation in the precincts of the parish, in the

cathedral or the church, and those suitable for presentation in an ordinary theatre.

These differences are as much of treatment and dramatic technique as of subject-matter. With a scarcity of plays, we seem to be constantly obliged to adapt plays intended for a different kind of place and sometimes for a different kind of actor; and while an ingenious producer can do a good deal, an adapted play is never quite so satisfactory as one designed for the actual situation. The first question to ask before writing a play is, where is it to be produced? and second, what sort of actors will be available? It takes a good deal of experience before an author knows exactly what effects can be obtained under what conditions. If I may illustrate from my own meagre experience, with *Murder in the Cathedral* I knew in advance for what conditions I was writing it; but I have only found out since for what conditions it was not suited.[13] In the first place, a play about the death of a martyr in a cathedral could not be played within a cathedral, especially the cathedral within which the martyrdom took place. Not enough details are known of such an event, to re-enact it with accurate detail; and in so far as the event is realistically reproduced, the doing so on its site would obviously be in bad taste. And in so far as one departed from the known facts, the effect in such a place would probably be grotesque. The theatre therefore had to be the chapter-house: a chapter-house with a dais for which, at that time, all entrances and exits had to be effected through the audience and down an aisle of considerable length. And of course the audience were to be all on the same level, rather farther below the level of the stage than most of the seats in a theatre. But while I was aware of the situation for which I was writing, I was not aware of the other situations for which I was not writing: I only discovered by experience that I had not thought of it as ever being seen from a gallery – from this point of view certain moments in the play inevitably turn out to be less effective.[14] I think that plays to be performed in the open air should be written, as Greek drama was, expressly for the open air; plays to be performed in parish churches should be written for parish churches, and so on. It would be interesting if, to illustrate this opinion, some obliging dramatist would write on the same theme three variants, one for the small church, another for the cathedral, and a third for the ordinary theatre. And another consideration is that of the time of playing. A play that has been cut, however skilfully – and assuming that its original length is organically right – is never so satisfactory as one written to take

the exact length of time suitable to the circumstances. It is a great pity that we cannot always see *Hamlet* complete.

From the point of view of the young dramatist, there ought to be great possibilities in writing plays and little plays for production – mostly by amateurs of course – on church occasions. There is certainly this advantage. I do not say that the commercial stage will reject a play merely because it is superior. It is rather that the commercial stage has to look first for good craftsmanship, and it naturally prefers a well-built play, an efficient job with no moral or intellectual significance (or less than none) to a play of moral insight or verbal beauty which is badly made. The people, in the modern world, who are naturally clever craftsmen, are not, I think, usually apt to be anything more. The man who has something more to give can, I hope, learn the craft by sheer doggedness; but he needs something more than hard work; he needs the opportunity to see his work produced, to profit by the co-operation and counsels of producers and actors and to acquire their point of view. In writing plays for religious occasions he can be learning his craft – though a very weary process it is – and at the same time feel that he is doing something that has a use to others, and is not *merely* a part of his own education towards some eventual popular success.

But if this opportunity is to be given – though I think that the supply might stimulate the demand – a more experimental and adventurous spirit is required from audiences and from those responsible for forwarding such projects, than is I fear apt to be the rule. *Convention* in art form is a good thing, when we mean by it a type which has grown up naturally through a generation or more of experiment: *conventionality* is a bad thing, and about the worst blight that can fall upon religious plays. Many pious people can easily be shocked by any innovation in religious drama however much more life and reality it brings: it was permissible for shepherds to joke and play pranks in the fifteenth century, or for Noah's wife to bawl and drink ale, but levity – and perhaps unusual seriousness as well – are unsuitable to the twentieth century. Nothing in the nature of a shock is tolerable: we are apt to forget that the original biblical events which in the biblical narrative we treat with such familiarity, are in themselves, if we regard them with fresh eyes, profoundly shocking.

On the other hand, I think that audiences may be more receptive of new treatment and unfamiliar ideas than people in charge of church theatricals always give them credit for. One might have supposed, from reading it, that

Mr. Charles Williams's Epiphany play, *The Three Kings*, could never get a performance; but when it was done last January by the Chelmsford Diocesan Religious Drama Society, it proved extremely effective; and particularly impressive was the enthusiasm and conviction with which the amateur company acted it.[15] One felt that they were happy in having a religious play to do that was really exciting and out of the ordinary.

In closing, there is a dream that I like to indulge. I like to think that at some time in the future every cathedral will have its own permanent company of amateurs and its own cycle of modern religious plays, and that they will rival each other in perfection of production. The pilgrim of drama would journey one year to see the Nativity of one cathedral, and perhaps the next year to see that of another; and connoisseurs would debate hotly the respective merits of the Whitsun play of Rochester and that of Wells.[16] Something of this sort might have a good effect in several directions. Under present conditions, the universal craving for drama is very imperfectly satisfied. The theatre – and consequently the standards of audiences everywhere – is excessively metropolitanised. Belated touring companies still carry to provincial centres, not necessarily what is best in London, but what has proved most successful and portable. Mechanisation comes to kill local life: with the universal picture palace, you may travel the world over and be unable to avoid Shirley Temple;[17] television may have a still more deadly effect on local life; and just as food comes to be something you have got out of a tin, and not something you have grown for yourself, so drama may mean for millions of people something out of a box or thrown onto a screen. The result is, of course, that only what can give some degree of pleasure to the largest number of people has any likelihood of being made available. Both as a symbol and as a force, what can better represent local life than the cathedral? Each cathedral has its own character and its own tradition, each is the central point of a district with its own character and tradition. A cathedral cannot be packed up and exported in tins; it cannot be communicated on either long or short waves. To experience it you must go to it, to know it you must live with it. This is why I hope that our cathedrals may become centres, each of its own characteristic dramatic activity.

T. S. ELIOT.

NOTES

1*. TSE's note: "An Address delivered to The Friends of Rochester Cathedral." Invited to give a talk on "Religious Drama" by the Dean of Rochester in Mar 1937, TSE delivered it on 4

June before a reunion of the Friends. On 2 July, after receiving an honorary Doctorate of Laws (LL.D.) from the University of Edinburgh, he evidently delivered it again as the inaugural address of the English Literary Society, hosted by the Rev. Professor John Baillie, Chair of Divinity; it was published in the next issue of the University's journal as an "important paper." It was later reprinted in a limited hardcover edition of 300 copies in America (New York: House of Books, 1954), for which TSE wrote the following prefatory remark: "I believe this is the text of an address which I delivered to the Friends of Rochester Cathedral in 1937. On re-reading it, I find it dated by internal evidence. It was obviously written after the production of *Murder in the Cathedral*, and before I had written any other play. It is also obvious that it was written before I had re-read Ibsen's plays. As a result of studying Ibsen's plays, and criticising my own plays of contemporary life, I have a very much higher opinion of Ibsen than I appear to have held in 1937. In fact, I repudiate what I have here said about Ibsen. Otherwise, the address seems to contain the early statement of ideas subsequently developed elsewhere, as well as, I trust, a few observations which have not been repeated."

2. Collections of religious dramas designated by the cities in which they were performed during religious festivals. TSE taught *Everyman*, the *Second Shepherds' Play*, and other morality, mystery, and interlude plays in his 1918 Extension course on Elizabethan literature (1.754).

3. Florentine painter Giotto di Bondone (ca. 1266-ca. 1337); his revisions of medieval art forms anticipated the painting techniques of the Italian Renaissance.

4. Joseph Addison, co-founder of *The Spectator*, and Samuel Johnson, author of most of the essays in "The Idler" series of the *Universal Chronicle*. The *Daily Mirror* is a British tabloid newspaper first published in 1903.

5. A fifteenth-century mystery play of the Resurrection in which Mary Magdalene, Mary Salome, and Mary, Mother of James visit Jesus's tomb, and Christ appears to Mary Magdalene as a gardener.

6. A mystery play that depicts the biblical story of Noah. The play departs from the biblical account when Noah's wife shrewishly refuses to board the ark because she would rather stay with her friends. The earliest reference to the Chester cycle dates to 1422, but the extant version of the cycle was likely composed in the late sixteenth century.

7. Russian playwright Anton Chekhov.

8. In Pierre Corneille's *Polyeucte* (1641), the title character chooses to die a Christian martyr at the hands of the Romans. TSE held Charles Péguy's critique of *Polyeucte* in particularly high regard as "perhaps the best thing on *Polyeucte* ever written" (1.485). For an explanation of Jean Racine's *Bérénice* (1670) as "Christian tragedy," see TSE's second Norton lecture "Apology for the Countess of Pembroke" (1932) (4.599).

9. For TSE's earlier remarks on Shaw and his theory of the Life Force, see "Mr. Robertson and Mr. Shaw" (1926) (2.781-82) and "The Humanism of Irving Babbitt" (1928) (3.459).

10. In "Baudelaire" (1930), TSE remarks: "His *ennui* may of course be explained . . . but it is also . . . a true form of *acedia*, arising from the unsuccessful struggle towards the spiritual life" (4.158).

11. A major street in the heart of London's commercial West End theater district.

12. Originally published as *The Lives of the Fathers, Martyrs, and Other Principal Saints* by Alban Butler (1710-73), an English Catholic priest. First issued in four volumes between 1756 and 1759, this work details the lives of over 1,600 saints and has undergone numerous republications.

13. TSE's verse drama depicting the 1170 assassination of Archbishop Thomas Becket in Canterbury Cathedral was first performed for the Canterbury Festival in 1935.

14. TSE wrote *Murder in the Cathedral* specifically for performance in the cathedral close during the Canterbury Festival. Shortly after the festival, it played at the Mercury Theatre for a few months.

15. Charles Williams (1886-1945), critic, novelist, poet, and playwright, worked as a reader for the Oxford University Press and was a member of the Inklings with C. S. Lewis and J. R. R. Tolkien. TSE and Williams met in the late 1920s through Ottoline Morrell. In the 1930s, they both participated in the revival of religious drama. Williams's *Thomas Cranmer of Canterbury* was performed for the Canterbury Festival in 1936, following the performance of TSE's *Murder in the Cathedral*. TSE also expressed willingness to provide monetary support to the Chelmsford Diocesan Religious Drama Guild (15 Jan 1937). Faber published several of Williams's books, including *Descent into Hell* (1937), *Witchcraft* (1941), *The Figure of Beatrice* (1943), and *All Hallows' Eve* (1945).

TSE misremembers the title of Williams's Nativity play, *Seed of Adam* (1936), in which the three kings (magi) appear. After Phyllis Potter – director of the Chelmsford Diocesan Religious Drama Guild – produced *Seed of Adam* for performances in Dec 1936 and Jan 1937, TSE explained in a letter of 4 Jan to Ottoline Morrell that he had agreed to "go to Chelmsford to speak for a mystery play there to be produced and written by Charles Williams." TSE and Williams both gave speeches after a performance at Brentwood Town Hall on 9 Jan 1937. When the Chelmsford Guild advertised its first London performances for 13 and 27 Nov 1937 at the Rudolf Steiner Hall, TSE's testimonial was included: "The first piece of evidence I have seen of the great possibilities of the modern mystery play, by a writer of exceptional and lonely gifts."

16. Cathedrals in the cities of Rochester and Wells.

17. Shirley Temple (1928-2014) was a child star who became Hollywood's top box office draw from 1935 to 1938.

The Development of Shakespeare's Verse. Two Lectures[1]

These two unpublished lectures on Shakespeare were first delivered at Edinburgh University on 27-28 Oct 1937 and repeated as the Lewis Fry Lectures at Bristol University on 2-3 Oct 1941, with a new introduction, the insertion of three additional textual paragraphs, and several stylistic emendations. Following postponement of the lectures due to bombing damage at the University in 1940, TSE wrote to Vice-Chancellor J. F. Dobson on 6 Mar 1941 to reschedule for the autumn: "You may remember that the Lectures I offered were a set of two previously delivered at Edinburgh but which I was anxious to re-write and expand. With the various distractions presented by the war, I have done nothing about these Lectures and they remain in their original state. I should not like to give them again exactly as before. I have a great aversion to repeating myself and I should not consider that I was treating Bristol with sufficient respect." TSE wrote to John Hayward on 10 Oct after returning from Bristol: "I gave my Shakespeare lectures in a scarlet gown, and of course chatted to various professors and their wives at teas and at dinner each night." See the textual note at the end of the lectures for information on the typescripts.

I

Anyone who ventures to talk about Shakespeare to a University audience may feel called upon – not to present his credentials, for if they exist, they are already known – but to excuse his speaking without them. The credentials I have in mind are those of scholarship, which I do not pretend to possess; the excuse I have in mind is the example of a writer who has put us in his debt by his contributions to the understanding of Shakespeare from the point of view of a practical dramatic producer. Sir Harley Granville-Barker, by producing Shakespeare plays, and bringing to the study of Shakespeare a knowledge of the permanent conditions of theatrical effect, has, I think everyone will agree, thrown a good deal of light on their meaning. Sir Harley is himself a successful dramatist.[2] I cannot claim to have been that, except by accident; but I have given a good deal of study to the problems of dramatic versification: and perhaps I had better make plain, that I do not consider that one has to be wholly successful in the attempt to find a dramatic verse form for one's own time, to get a little insight into its permanent conditions: for one learns by failure as well as by success, and perhaps best of all by having got somewhere between failure and success. If one is to hope to make any contribution, however slight, which will owe its

value to one's own experience as a workman, it is desirable to forget everything that one has read about Shakespeare, and to read nothing but Shakespeare himself. That is not very difficult, because very few writers, even poets, have approached Shakespeare's plays, in quite this way: though I must pay an acknowledgement, before proceeding, to Mr. Wilson Knight's study of Shakespeare imagery, and his attention to the musical element in the dramatic effect.[3] And for my starting point, it is convenient to make use of Granville-Barker's Romanes Lecture of a few years ago. It is related to my subject, it is an admirable essay, and it presents the advantage of offering several statements for me to disagree with.

In this lecture Sir Harley says: "Some poets may have proved poor dramatists enough" – that is a statement with which I can agree – "but what great dramatist has not been a poet? But, if poets are born, dramatists are made. For playwriting is a craft as well as an art, and a craft must be learnt."[4]

I should like to believe that dramatists can be made, without having been born, but I am sure that poets are not merely born but made too, partly by circumstance and partly by hard work. The capacity for development may be innate – that is a tautology anyway. But of this I have no doubt: that Shakespeare was made a great poet by writing for the theatre. His greatest verse was arrived at by a slow process – or a process which seems slow merely because we can follow every stage of it; though considering the extent of the development, and the short number of years in which the development took place, a very rapid development indeed. I cannot think of any other poet, in any language known to me, whose poetry improved so gradually and steadily during the course of years. And had he adopted any other medium than that of the theatre, I cannot believe that the gifted author of *Venus and Adonis* would have risen so far above the limitations of his age as he did.[5]

What I wish to be quite clear about, to begin with, is that Shakespeare's verse improved, not merely in becoming more and more adapted to the purposes of the acted play, but absolutely. Beyond a point, indeed, I am not sure that this development made any further contribution to theatrical success, although it continued in the same sense. There is a period during which Shakespeare is obviously developing his blank verse to make it capable of a much larger and more subtle range of dramatic effect, without letting go the means of repeating and improving upon effects successfully produced before. The earlier characters are personages, the later are persons. But beside and beyond he seems to have had interests of his own,

intentions dramatic but not making for dramatic success. Now it has been sometimes assumed that Shakespeare's most popular plays are his best, and in a sense that must be true. Successful plays are frequently bad, but success is one measure of competence. But I do not think that the question of why some of Shakespeare's plays are permanently popular, and others are not good box-office, has ever been thoroughly investigated. At the present time, I think there is opportunity for such an examination. The less popular plays are sometimes produced, and for *Troilus and Cressida*, *Measure for Measure*, and even *Timon*, there has been a small but enthusiastic public.[6] I should say that in these plays there is as good dramatic verse as any Shakespeare ever wrote, and I would make that claim even for *The Winter's Tale* and *Pericles*.[7] And the more one studies these plays, the less simple becomes the question of in what way they are inferior to the four great tragedies.

Mr. Granville-Barker maintains that great poetic drama does not consist simply of a good play translated into great verse, or of great poetry superimposed upon a good play; and so far I agree with him. But he goes on to maintain that a prose play is an incomplete play – I hope I do not travesty his meaning in translating it into my own words; and that poetry alone provides the dramatic language we need, "capable of expressing thought and emotion combined, and, at times, emotion almost divorced, from thought" [34]. Here again, I do not disagree; but I feel that there is an assumption behind his words which we need not accept without examination. It is the assumption of a dramatic ideal, that there must be the perfect drama, and that everything short of this is partial failure. I incline rather towards a sort of nominalism: to maintain that the term "drama" covers a good many things, so that we cannot isolate the pure dramatic; and so that, if you want more of one thing, you must sacrifice something of another.

My final question is not: what is necessary for a great poetic drama? but what is the dramatic quality in verse, and in what way is some verse more dramatic than other verse? Now, I have come to the conclusion, simply from reading the texts, that in Shakespeare's verse there is a pretty steady development from first to last, and that it is developed more fully in some plays which one cannot say are greater than in some others in which the dramatic versification is less interesting. And at this point the question of why some plays of Shakespeare are more popular than others becomes of a great deal of interest. The question of how much the popularity of a play has to do with its merit is one which I have never seen fully answered. On

the one hand, no one will concede that immediate popularity is sufficient evidence of the goodness of a play; but on the other hand we are all willing to admit that continued popularity, over several generations and in different places, is some evidence of greatness. The critic who sets out to prove that *Hamlet* is a bad play is unlikely to persuade us.[8] How can a play which has never succeeded be a great play, and how can a play which has succeeded like *Hamlet*, at such different times, under such different conditions, and in different languages, not be a great play? But because *Richard III* and *Richard II* are permanently more popular than *Measure for Measure* and *Troilus and Cressida*, should we conclude that they are greater plays?[9]

The question of the importance of popular success as a criterion of the greatness of a play is only a special case of a larger question, that of the importance of popular appeal as a criterion for our judgement of a work of any kind of literature. To go very far in that investigation would lead me astray from my main subject: but to remind you of the connections is I think to the point. I do not think that the greatness of a work of art can be gauged only by a poll of the percentage of the public which enjoys it at any one time, but I do not think that general appeal is a matter of indifference. We hear from time to time an outcry against literature which appears to be composed with an eye to a small and esoteric public. Such expostulation may have in it the germ of just criticism, or it may be merely the explosion of jealousy: you can only decide that when you know what particular works are objected to, and examine these works for yourself. The limitation of a writer's appeal may be due to calculated charlatanism, or more likely unconscious charlatanism, or it may be simply failure, or it may spring from social causes too deep to be recognised – a separation between cultural groups, a division between the parts of society, so great that the writer has to write for one or another part of the public, be wholly popular or wholly limited, and making an equal sacrifice either way, if he is to write at all. It does matter that a writer should have some appeal to as large a public as possible, and it is a grave defect if the enjoyment and appreciation of his work depends upon having some particular background, understanding a particular set of conventions, having had a particular type of education, or simply "knowing the people" he is writing about: but it is quite a different case if what stands between his work and the larger public is the laziness or insensibility of the reader. Confusion between the true standard of universality and the false standard of popularity may easily lead us to decry not

only the writings that express uncommon feeling and thought, but to decry uncommon feeling and thought themselves, and so lead to a general abasement of culture. It is permissible and right to speak primarily to a small audience, if that audience has its organic place in society, if that audience is really representative of the most highly developed intelligence and sensibility of the people – but not an audience which has become completely cut off from the rest of society. A great writer may appeal only to a small audience, but if so, it must be an audience which has a functional importance in the whole of society.

It was the work of Shakespeare, more than any other writer, to appeal to every audience, and so to keep them cohering: to overcome the separation between the courtly group of Senecans, and the crowd at the fair. And it was the theatre which forced him to write for everybody. In his later work, he was not tending to write for a small group: he tended to write for himself. It is one thing to do this at the beginning, and quite another to do it after you have mastered the art of popular appeal. For Shakespeare was not turning away from the theatre, but taking it with him onto a plane where the majority of the audience can never follow.[10]

There are three reasons why a play may succeed when first produced. There is the accident of its happening to be less tedious than any of its competitors of the moment – a reason with which we need not be further concerned. There is the reason of its concerning itself with some matter of topical interest, which may in a greater or less time become stale or obscure; or dealing with its matter in a style topical and intelligible at the moment, but of no continuing interest. And finally, there is the possibility that with all its faults, or with all its cheapness and meanness, it may have some genuine dramatic virtue. As for this reason, I suspect that no play that runs continuously for a long time is wholly without some dramatic virtue: even if after that run it disappears into oblivion for the rest of time.

But when we come to examine which of Shakespeare's plays are his most popular, and why, we find it very difficult to make order out of the selection. Perhaps there is room for considerable disagreement as to which are most popular, but I will venture on a provisional list of popular plays, but not in any order of precedence.

Hamlet
Romeo and Juliet
Macbeth

Othello
Julius Caesar[11]

Richard III
Richard II
Henry V

Twelfth Night
Midsummer Night's Dream
The Merchant of Venice
Much Ado About Nothing
As You Like It[12]

I am not sure whether *The Tempest*, or *The Taming of the Shrew*, or *The Comedy of Errors* ought to be included or not.[13] And although I think it would be generally agreed that *Hamlet* is the most popular, the order of precedence in popularity among the others would probably vary considerably. And there are fluctuations, perhaps. I would suggest that there may be different reasons for the order of preference among the comedies, from those for the order of preference among the tragedies. For the purpose of estimating popularity, *Much Ado About Nothing* is practically a prose play. The popularity of *Midsummer Night's Dream* seems to me to be a partial popularity of the same kind as that of *Henry IV*.[14] That is to say, it is really only the Bottom scenes in the former, and the Falstaff scenes in the latter, that draw the audiences. It is as historical tragedies that *Richard II* and *III* are popular: but *Henry IV* as a kind of comedy. To a small part of the audience, the interest of the Falstaff scenes will be as I think Shakespeare also meant it: as a kind of choral commentary upon the values of the military leaders and political intriguers. To a small part of the audience the interest of *Midsummer Night's Dream* will be fundamentally in the extraordinary beauty of the pattern which is made by interweaving three planes of reality – that of the court, that of fairyland, and that of the village artisans. But it is not these patterns that make the plays popular; yet it must be what makes them popular that makes them dramatically "successful."

What I am trying to lead up to is this: the suggestion that dramatic verse is not simply the perfect and final medium for dramatic poetry, but that it introduces other interests and values, which exceed the demands of the "dramatic," if we keep "dramatic" to its meaning of what is effective on the stage for an audience. I would not however draw a sharp distinction between

verse and prose. The same extra-dramatic or ultra-dramatic interest may be present in a prose play, when the author is interested in the use of language for its own sake, in the beauty of words and in what we may call their incantatory value; interested in language beyond the limited needs of expressing the thoughts and shades of feeling of a particular character at a particular moment. How far a particular author has this interest will remain largely a matter of individual opinion. Of dramatists whose work we know only in translation, such as Ibsen and Chekhov, we are unable to judge: I feel this love of words to be present in *The Way of the World*;[15] but for all I know, it might be completely absent from a foreign translation of that play. I am not going to draw any distinction between verse and prose, as dramatic media, to correspond to that between poetry and prose. It is enough that this "poetic" interest should be more clearly manifest in a great verse play than in a prose one.

Mr. Granville-Barker, in commending verse (or poetry) as the ideal medium for drama, says of the poet, that "His are the means, then, by which we can best be persuaded, for the time, that these characters in a play are, soul and body, living creatures like ourselves" [34]. But I should think that poetry did more than that. On one plane of reality, the prose of Mr. Noel Coward can give us more of an impression of "living creatures like ourselves" than can the verse of Shakespeare. It all depends on the plane of reality on which we choose to take "ourselves" as existing, whether that of social comedy or disaster, or that which we individually and unaided never reach. The creatures of poetic drama, certainly, must not be living creatures totally unlike ourselves, such as the creatures in *Prometheus Unbound*. They must have a direct contact with us at the starting point of their emotions, and the situations from which these emotions arise must be comprehensible to us in terms of ordinary daily living; but they should exist also in a world to which we only penetrate when carried in to it by their words. Not only in Shakespeare, but in some of the finest plays by his contemporaries, you will find that some of the great speeches, which most thrill you on the stage as well as in reading, are those in which a person is speaking, not out of character, but beyond character. The distinction is an important one. With the kind of great speech I have in mind, you never feel: "this is a passage of beautiful poetry that might have been spoken by anybody" – you always feel that no other character could have uttered it: and yet it has the impersonality of something which simply utters itself, which exists in its own life. You get this in the great speech of Vindice in *The Revenger's*

Tragedy, beginning "And yet methinks I could e'en chide myself";[16] you get it here and there in the great tragedies of Chapman. And nothing could illustrate it better than Macbeth's familiar "She should have died hereafter" and the words that follow;[17] or the long address of the Duke to Claudio in *Measure for Measure*, beginning "Be absolute for death."[18] It is not merely that in a great play every speech may add to our knowledge of that particular character, and while unpredictable and surprising, yet seems inevitable and true; it is, in poetic drama, that we are lifted to another plane of reality, or a hidden and mysterious pattern of reality appears as from a palimpsest.

Now I think that this new pattern which appears is something more than the completion or perfection of the dramatic; I would venture to say that it is something which may tend to supersede the ordinarily dramatic. For its purposes, a plot or a group of characters may happen to be eminently suitable, although lacking the ordinary appeal to the audience. The audience may accept it, or even be moved by it, so long as there is something more ordinary to attend to. The plot must be one of immediately acceptable and recognisable human emotions. A tragedy should in general have a murder; and a detective interest, as in *Oedipus Rex* and the first part of *Hamlet*, is useful; and a comedy should have an imbroglio of human confusion to be cheerfully cleared up. And there should be at least one character who is sympathetic, with whom we feel at ease, in an ordinary sociable way.

In a great verse play of Shakespeare, there are, it seems to me, two patterns which can be distinguished but not divided: the dramatic and the musical. One must be careful not to take this term "musical" too literally. I am not comparing dramatic poetry to opera. I mean that it is something over and above plot, development of character, and conflict of character: a pattern of action in which the characters do more than act of themselves, and of speech expressing more than what the characters know or know they feel. Something is exhibited of which we have only rare glimpses in our daily life. Who has not felt a mysterious antipathy, now and then, towards someone whom he liked and had every reason for liking; and who has not sometimes had the odd feeling of a peculiar intimate relationship with another person whom perhaps he did not know well, or care about, or whom he actually disliked? But in a great verse play, in the rhythms and the imagery, in their recurrences and permutations, there is a pattern of emotion beyond that which we originally know as human. Mr. Granville-Barker might say at this point that I am only putting into different words what he

has written himself: for he says that the poet "appeals, past reason, past consciousness often, to our entire sentient being" [34]. My qualification is, that this appeal exceeds the requirements of the dramatic, for it is used to do something more than reveal individual psychology or in the ordinary sense group psychology; that it is not merely in the particular phrase but, in the hands of a master, is a pattern throughout the whole play; and that without being un-dramatic it may be in conflict with the ordinary dramatic upon which our conscious mind is fixed.

I must here pay a tribute to Mr. G. Wilson Knight, who has analysed the more apprehensible elements in the poetic pattern of a number of Shakespeare's plays; he is sometimes over-elaborate, indeed, and a few plays thus dealt with give us the clue as well as a great many; and sometimes he endeavours to catch a falling star: but nevertheless an important contribution.[19]

These considerations bring me back to the point which I may seem to have raised for a moment to no purpose, that of the relative popularity of Shakespeare's plays. If I am anywhere near right in my list of popular plays, it includes several which are comparatively early and crude, like *Richard III*, and does not extend beyond *Hamlet*, *Macbeth* and *Othello*, with the doubtful exception of *The Tempest* which is more read than played. I have suggested that two plays, *Henry IV* and *Midsummer Night's Dream*, are popular because of particular scenes and characters. Now, if my distinction between the dramatic and the ultra-dramatic is valid, it gives a way out from three unsatisfactory conclusions (1) that Shakespeare developed his drama to a point near perfection, and thereafter his powers gradually became enfeebled, or (2) that several of the plays of his maturity, such as *Measure for Measure* and *Troilus* are inferior, that he used up all the good subjects, and amused himself with his later plays because he could think of nothing better to do, or (3) the popular judgement is wrong.

What we may expect to find is a gradual, but irregular development while Shakespeare is learning the possibilities of the stage and of language, up to the point at which his fully developed dramatic skill occurs in a play in which the maximum of the ultra-dramatic is maintained in solution in what the audience can take: and this play, I think, is *Hamlet*. Beyond that point, we should expect to find him exploring the possibilities of the ultra-dramatic, and neglecting the dramatic which he has mastered. This is, however, a very simplified account of the process. We must take into

account the element of accident, so to speak, which enters into the choice of subjects by a dramatist writing on that level, and turning out so many plays. A playwright who is merely a good craftsman, with the single-minded intention of picking subjects for the purpose of immediate stage success, has I think a better chance of continuous success than a writer like Shakespeare, whose motives are more numerous and more complicated. The number of themes at Shakespeare's disposal, as at anyone's, was limited, and some of his most popular plays are of course revisions of themes which had already proved their value. There are at no time many themes possessing the potential popularity of *Hamlet*, and we must leave room for the element of fortuity in the right subject presenting itself to the right man at the right moment. In success, which must remain one of our criteria of value, there is a part which is not due to the ability or the labour of the dramatist himself.

When however we take the work of Shakespeare, not as a mere succession of separate plays, but as a whole, a unity, the element of accident appears more and more negligible. No play of Shakespeare can be wholly "understood" by itself: it needs to be read in the light of all his previous and all his subsequent plays. It is not any one play, or any selection of plays, that is perfectly dramatic, but the complete sequence. Each one seems to have a peculiar inevitability in its place; and to insist upon the necessary limitation of each is to call attention to the perfection of the whole – as complete as can be compassed by any one man.

Before attempting any examination of Shakespeare's styles at different periods, I must commit myself to a few more general observations on what I mean by the development of dramatic verse. The history of poetry in English shows a process of approximation towards the language of conversation at each period. The language of poetry is liable to become arrested and fixed by writers of second-rate ability, while the language of conversation is in constant change. The artificiality of one period is usually based on the naturalness of a previous period; that is, it is partly artificiality but still more obsolescence.[20*] The innovator of a new period will be the man who begins a contemporary idiom. What makes an idiom contemporary is never easy to state. It is not so much a matter of using new words, and is still more superficially a matter of mentioning new objects such as aeroplanes and machine-guns. Nor is it essentially a matter of new metres, for the abstract possibilities of metric are limited: it may be a change of cadence

and inflexion or vocabulary in the same metres. It is the difference between the blank verse of Wordsworth and that of Marlowe,[21†] between the lyric of Blake and that of Collins. A poet is likely to begin by using the speech of his immediate predecessors, and to be urged on rather by a sense of its inadequacy for his purposes, than by a clear provision of what he wants. Simplicity and naturalness of speech are not necessarily his gift at the beginning; he is more likely to arrive at them in his maturity by years of hard work. The bare directness of W. B. Yeats's later lyrics is the result of a long process of development. The process of development consists in arriving at a more and more accurate setting down of the shades of feeling in a contemporary mind. The overpowering emotions are, if you like, something permanently the same at all times and in all peoples; but the poet is not concerned with emotion in the abstract, but with particular instances in particular concrete and infinitely complex situations.

The process of development of blank verse as taken over by Shakespeare began with a language which had quite recently become so highly literary that it was not so much an organised language as a huge and formless mass of words. So peculiarly vast and unmanageable was the problem at the time, that I do not believe that anyone less than Shakespeare could have coped with it; and what would have happened to the English language but for Shakespeare is something too remote to form any conception of. There are two kinds of natural speech: that of the peasant and that of the educated man. The perfection of peasant speech may be thought of as an adaptation to an environment which is limited and relatively stable, that of educated speech as an adaptation to what is large, complicated, of indefinite frontiers, and unstable. Imperfect speech is that of the half-educated, whom we have always with us,[22] speech which is imprecise or which has the hypnotic effect of oratory. The speech of Elizabethan stage began as oratory; and Shakespeare transmuted it into language.

It may be thought that in attributing so much to Shakespeare, I am giving much less than his due to Marlowe. I will admit that Marlowe appears clearly more precocious than Shakespeare. His verse has constant magniloquence. The words of Young Mortimer to Edward II –

> When wert thou in the field with banner spread,
> But once? and then thy soldiers marched like players,
> With garish robes, not armour; and thyself,
> Bedaubed with gold, rode laughing at the rest,

Nodding and shaking of thy spangled crest,
Where women's favours hung like labels down.[23]

have a ring of speech in them. And if you isolate his grandest moments, Marlowe seems at times almost the equal of Shakespeare. It is only his lack of range that Marlowe is seen from the beginning to be the inferior of Shakespeare, and to be unqualified to do the work for the language that Shakespeare did. Shakespeare had a superiority in smaller things, which was to make all the difference, and gives his great tragedies, when he came to them, a depth of meaning which Marlowe could never have sounded.

And here I might remark that I have ceased to take as of such very serious moment the problems of attribution, in the earlier plays of Shakespeare, to which my friend J. M. Robertson used to devote such learned ingenuity. It is quite easy for poets, up to maturity, to write like each other, and some of the most original may be most dextrous in this way. In revamping chronicle plays at short notice, it would be an obvious economy to use now and then somebody else's formula which has proved satisfactory, rather than stop to work out a new one for oneself. The dominant influence, in tragedies and histories, may for a moment have been that of Marlowe. I remain of the opinion that Marlowe's verse is a comparatively crude form of speech, which Shakespeare was to develop. Compare Marlowe at his best, in *Faustus*:

See, see, where Christ's blood streams in the firmament!
One drop would save my soul – half a drop: ah, my Christ!
Ah, rend not my heart for naming of my Christ!
Yet I will call on him: O spare me, Lucifer![24]

With Webster at his best:

I am puzzled in a question about hell:
He says, in hell there's one material fire,
And yet it shall not burn all men alike.
Lay him by. How tedious is a guilty conscience!
When I look into the fish-ponds in my garden,
Methinks I see a thing armed with a rake,
That seems to strike at me.[25]

That, of course, is from *The Duchess of Malfi*, but it represents a long process of development of blank verse as speech, between Marlowe and Webster, which is due to the work of Shakespeare. But, to make the difference

between Marlowe and Shakespeare clearer, I will quote a passage from *King John*:

> Well, now can I make any Joan a lady.
> "Good den, Sir Richard!" – "God-a-mercy, fellow!" –
> And if his name be George, I'll call him Peter;
> For new-made honour doth forget men's names;
> 'Tis too respective and too sociable
> For your conversion.[26]

For the importance of the character of the Bastard, I would refer to the admirable expositions by Mr. Middleton Murry in his book;[27] I am concerned not with the character, but with the verse he speaks: from this point of view he is as important for Shakespeare's development as from the other. He is a figure who appears ahead of time, in a play not suited to him; he almost breaks the weak frame of the chronicle, and for this reason has to become of diminished importance towards the end. But it is speech like this which foreshadows the creator not only of Iago, but of Timon and Lear and Antony; for it is the humanity of Shakespeare, without which the magniloquence of Marlowe is shallow, that makes those figures as great as they are.

Within the limits of the chronicle play no development of verse was possible, beyond the point to which Marlowe took it. I am not even prepared to say that *Richard II* is a much better play than *Edward II* in its poetry,[28†] except in the promise which one always feels to be present, of an inexhaustible richness – as in the one great line that leaps out so surprisingly towards the end of *Love's Labour's Lost*:

> To move wild laughter in the throat of death?[29]

Marlowe's verse, at its greatest, does everything that it is called upon to do. But with that of Shakespeare's which one can compare to it, one is aware of an immense and perhaps unconscious reserve power. As compared with *Edward II*, this is implicit also in the criticism of which one is conscious in the chronicle plays: for there seems to be no doubt of Shakespeare's opinion of that raving and cursing crew of royalty and nobles who present his picture of the Wars of the Roses. But his great folk speak, appropriately, either in the language of *Richard III* in his opening speech, which should be compared with the speech of Faulconbridge which I have quoted, in order to show the superiority of the latter; or in the balanced conceited style common throughout *King John*:

> In her eye I find
> A wonder, or a wondrous miracle,
> The shadow of myself formed in her eye;
> Which, being but the shadow of your son,
> Becomes a sun and makes your son a shadow.[30]

or such lines as, if they are not indeed by Marlowe, are a forgery of Marlowe as good as the original:

> O, then began the tempest to my soul,
> Who pass'd, methought, the melancholy flood
> With that grim ferryman which poets write of,
> Unto the kingdom of perpetual night.[31]

There are anticipations, of course. When the Bastard says:

> Your sword is bright, sir; put it up again.[32]

that is surely the line which appears in its full splendor in *Othello*:

> Keep up your bright swords, for the dew will rust them.[33]

in which, I think, there is a music that Marlowe never dreamt of.

For in the early plays of Shakespeare there are only occasional hints of what I may call the hidden music, the under and overtones. In these plays also is the dramatic skill, the business of the theatre, still not brought to its highest point; but the two qualities are not the same, although up to a point they develop together. For my purpose, and within my limits, it seems best to choose a few plays of each period, rather than attempt to say something about them all.

II

The first two scenes of *Romeo and Juliet* are unpromising. The opening dialogue of the servants of the two houses has dramatic value, though no great wit. The verse of the first scene is not (quite) up to the best of the chronicle plays; that of the second not superior to *Love's Labour's Lost*. It is with the appearance of the Nurse that the versification begins to come to life. After the early speeches of the Bastard in *King John*, the Nurse is the greatest contributor to the development of blank verse whom we have so

far met.[34] Nor, as in *King John*, is there only this one character with the gift of conversational verse: as well as the Nurse old Capulet has it –

> More light, you knaves; and turn the tables up,
> And quench the fire, the room is grown too hot.
> Ah, sirrah, this unlook'd-for sport comes well.
> Nay, sir, nay, sit, good cousin Capulet;
> For you and I are past our dancing days;
> How long is't now since last yourself and I
> Were in a mask?
> – By'r lady, thirty years.
> – What, man! 'Tis not so much, 'tis not so much.[35]

I insist upon the importance of this kind of speech, because I think that Shakespeare's mastery of it is something without which his greatest plays and highest dramatic moments would not be what they are. It is something in which Shakespeare excelled not only all other English dramatists, but, so far as I am competent to judge, all poetic dramatists; and which establishes the English language as of wider range than all others for dramatic poetry. I believe however that in the second half of the nineteenth century there was more of the conversational quality in French poetry than in English – as in the eighteenth century, after Pope, the living speech was that of Burns and Blake, not that of Gray and Collins. I make this diversion only as a reminder that the qualities of a language are not something that every scribbler inherits, like his father's furniture and family portraits, but something that every writer has to find afresh for himself; and they are not found very often.

Romeo and Juliet is peculiarly interesting because it is such a mixture of styles. How far the stiffness of the first scene is deliberate is a matter of conjecture; one can only say that it seems a little more artificial than is necessary, so that we are aware of a joint instead of having an insensible transition. For Mercutio's famous Queen Mab speech I do not find it easy to account. It is both immature, as compared to the best verse in the play, and masterly. It must be very difficult to act, and it is something which could only be accepted from Shakespeare. In its second passage – after Romeo has started to stop him – Mercutio has a faint anticipation of both *The Tempest* ("True, I talk of dreams")[36] and of *Hamlet* –

> Mercutio: Which is as thin of substance as the air . . .[37]
> Marcellus: For it is, as the air, invulnerable . . .[38]

and provides an instance of the occasions on which Shakespeare imposes upon his drama as much strain as the action will bear, in order to convey something logically and dramatically irrelevant that goes beyond drama. There are more satisfactory examples to be found later.

The other great innovation in verse of *Romeo and Juliet* is Act II, sc. ii, the balcony scene. In the opening speech there is still some trace of affectation –

> Two of the fairest stars in all the heaven,
> Having some business, do entreat her eyes
> To twinkle in their spheres till they return.[39]

yet one is aware from the beginning that here is a musical pattern coming, in this dialogue, as surprising in its kind as the early work of Beethoven. The arrangement of voices – as in Juliet's three single lines against Romeo's three, four and five, followed by her longer speech – is quite impeccable; and in the musical pattern it is Juliet's voice that leads; to her voice are assigned the dominant phrases of the whole duet –

> My bounty is as boundless as the sea,
> My love as deep; the more I give to thee,
> The more I have, for both are infinite. [ll. 133-35]

and to Juliet is given that key-word "lightning," which occurs again in the play, and which is of the greatest importance in this, one of the swiftest moving of all plays.

> 'Tis like lightning, which doth cease to be
> Ere one can say "It lightens."[40]

In *Romeo and Juliet* we find a greater variety of versification than in any previous play; but the different kinds are side by side, not completely welded. In *Hamlet* we find most clearly the next advance, an advance to a position beyond which, for primarily dramatic purposes, it is impossible to go. The first scene of *Hamlet* is a far more stupendous piece of writing than the balcony scene of *Romeo and Juliet*. Dramatically, it is, I believe, as fine an opening scene as you can find in the whole of drama anywhere; but what concerns me is the astonishing variation of style, without ever any sense of incongruity. The first 22 lines are made out of the simplest words and the most homely idiom. Shakespeare has developed the colloquial beyond the monologue of the character part – that is to say, the occasion on which we are aware and meant to be aware, of the homeliness of the speech – into

the quick dramatic dialogue. The diction has become perfectly transparent; one looks quite through it and only sees the meaning. And this is a test, I believe, for mastery in dramatic verse. I do not say that there is no place, in the drama, for the situation in which part of one's enjoyment will come from the conscious enjoyment of listening to great poetry – in fact, there is a very large place for such writing. I only say that the great dramatic poet is one who can make us forget at the right moment, that there is any distinction between poetry and prose. When the curtain rises and the officers of Elsinore begin to speak, we are too absorbed in the meaning to consider the medium. Only a great dramatic poet can do that to us; and at such moments the dramatist and the poet are perfectly one.

I have said that this scene of *Hamlet* shows great variety. From the short brusque ejaculations of the beginning we glide into the slower movement after the appearance of Horatio and Marcellus –

> Horatio says 'tis but our fantasy . . .[41]

changing, on the appearance of the Ghost, to the dignity of

> Who art thou, that usurp'st this time of night . . .[42]

and the suggestion of majesty of

> So frown'd he once, when, in an angry parle,
> He smote the sledded Polacks on the ice.[43]

There is an abrupt change of rhythm in Horatio's words to the Ghost on its second appearance; and this staccato is checked by the slower movement of

> We do it wrong, being so majestical,
> To offer it the show of violence . . .[44]

and the scene is perfectly resolved with the speeches of Marcellus –

> Marcellus: It faded on the crowing of the cock.
> Some say, that ever 'gainst that season comes
> Wherein Our Saviour's birth is celebrated,
> The bird of dawning singeth all night long.[45]

and then Horatio:

> So have I heard and do in part believe it.
> But look, the morn, in russet mantle clad,
> Walks o'er the dew of yon high eastward hill;

Break we our watch up . . .[46]

Now, although I have said and maintain that the whole scene is perfect drama, I believe that the need for ending the scene with these lines is musical rather than dramatic. Note however that Horatio's two lines of lyricism are prefaced by a line of the simplest colloquial speech –

So have I heard and do in part believe it.

and that after the lovely dawn image he turns off abruptly[47†] with a phrase of dramatic necessity which is almost a stage direction –

Break we our watch up . . .

The popularity of *Hamlet* – and when I use that word here I am never using it in a disparaging sense, but as "deserved popularity" – the rightful primacy of *Hamlet* on the stage appears to be due to a concurrence of several causes. It is far from being one of those plays which have the most plausible stories; and it certainly has not the best constructed plot. Although, as I have said, the first scene is all that a first scene should be, the movement is disturbed by Hamlet's departure for England, and the interest is only renewed by surprise and contrast. According to dramatic rules, Shakespeare wrote better plays later; and while *Hamlet* contains some of his finest dramatic verse, his later poetry is just as fine and just as dramatic. But *Hamlet* was written at just that period in the author's life at which a man is able to produce something that corresponds to a crisis in the ordinary man's life; and Hamlet is a role in which every man can, in fantasy, cast himself. From the positive desperate fury of *Timon* or *Troilus* most people are repelled: few wish to see themselves in either of those parts. The more objective studies of human nature in *Measure for Measure*, *Antony and Cleopatra* and *Coriolanus* require a more mature, sobered imagination to enjoy, and still more do the last plays. And people in general are more inclined to be interested by an author's statement of his problems, than by his resolution of them.

It is then, as I see it, partly because *Hamlet* represents the farthest point to which the audience can go with Shakespeare in his development, that it is the most successful. There is no later character with which you can identify yourself to the same degree; and with the later characters you are not, so to speak, expected to identify yourself. Now such considerations as these may at first appear to belittle the greatness of *Hamlet*, or to attribute it to

accident or the limitations of audience. I may seem to you to imply, that the later plays are really greater, but that only the very high browed can appreciate them. That is not my meaning at all. I am not much interested in the relative greatness of the plays, because what I see is the work of Shakespeare as a whole. It seems to me to correspond to some profound law of nature, that in the work of such a man as Shakespeare you should find a point at which he touches the imagination and feeling of the greatest number of people to the greatest possible depth, and that thereafter, like a comet continuing its course away from the earth, he should gradually disappear into his private mystery.

There are more superficial and more easily accepted reasons for the success of *Hamlet*. I am not sure that, at least for the English audience, a too consistent plot and economical action are not a disadvantage. What is wanted is plenty of incident, suspense, surprise and variety. *Hamlet* is superior in providing all these, together with a dominant tone which unifies them and makes each incident essential. In reading the play, we notice scenes which appear superfluous; and these scenes usually are omitted. But when we see the play, as occasionally we can, entire, we are struck by the importance of everything in the play – though to say why it is essential is not so easy. Act IV, sc. iv. (the passage of Fortinbras to Poland) is a conspicuous instance. I do not see how any handbook of how to write a play could justify this scene: it would appear, on prosaically dramatic principles, a very long and roundabout way of making a very simple point; and the point once made, makes it more difficult to understand why Hamlet went to England at all. And yet it is immensely effective.

If, as I have suggested, the popularity of *Hamlet* is due to a balance of qualities, we may expect that of the later plays some will be as good in many respects, some will be better in some respects. There are a great many things worth trying, and you cannot attempt them all at once; and Shakespeare, having mastered his medium, could hardly be expected to want to do the same thing twice. I think that it is a mistake to consider *Hamlet* as the most profound of Shakespeare's plays: not because any other play is more so, but because when Shakespeare has reached his maturity, there is no meaning in measuring relative depth. But I suggest that after *Hamlet* and *Macbeth* Shakespeare comes to demand more of the auditor. There are other plays as dominated by one figure: *Lear* and *Coriolanus*. But neither of these characters, in himself, is as "interesting" as Hamlet. In order to appreciate them, we have to see them as a part, even though a dominant part, of a whole

situation; we cannot simply take each scene as it comes, but have to be able to grasp the play as a whole; and this requires as much familiarity and study as grasping a symphony as a whole. And, as the emotion tends to become something which exists only in the whole play, so the author perhaps comes to find that he is interested in expressing emotion which is beyond the primary "dramatic." This is not un dramatic or non dramatic: it is another plane of dramatic reality. The only question is whether the author will explore farther into this world than the audience can follow him. Now, the beautiful balcony scene in *Romeo and Juliet* which I have mentioned is what I call self-contained: although it expresses more than can be supposed to be in the awareness of the two lovers, it is never beyond character, and says what all lovers in that position would like to be able to say. And the first scene of *Hamlet* does not require us to transcend our ordinary plane of living in order to be absorbed in it. Nor do Hamlet's soliloquies demand of us any great extension of consciousness. But the agony of Lear is something so intense that we can hardly divine it, or, as we do, we find ourselves becoming a state of feeling so overpowering that Lear himself disappears in it.

At this point I feel called upon to make a digression. After writing what I have said about *Hamlet* above, it occurred to me that I might as well find out whether it was inconsistent with some remarks that I made about the same play many years ago – remarks which achieved a notoriety beyond their importance, and not at every moment enviable. I re-read my earlier paper – and to re-read any prose that I have written, at any time from six months after publication, is always a torture to me. What I regret in this instance is my use of the word "success" and "failure." I called *Hamlet* an "artistic failure" and *Coriolanus* and *Antony and Cleopatra* Shakespeare's "most assured artistic successes."[48] I still think the two later plays much better pieces of construction; I still think the workmanship more masterly throughout; and I still accept the criticisms of Stoll and Robertson.[49] *Coriolanus* is[50†] certainly more agreeable to a taste formed on the French classic theatre. But as for "success"! I now take rather more the view of people of the theatre, that anything is successful that succeeds. "Success" was the wrong word. And as for the intractability of the material, I am not sure now, that for the poetic dramatist, all material is not more or less intractable – at any rate, when one is Shakespeare. I mean that from the time of his maturity – from *Hamlet* – there appears dimly another plane of emotion, apprehensible through the music of the play – coming from the depths of Shakespeare himself, so that the people in the play have at least a

double existence. And here again I should wish to qualify the words of Granville-Barker which I quoted before. The poet, says Granville-Barker, "appeals past reason, past consciousness often, to our entire sentient being." So far, I agreed. But he adds you remember: "His are the means, then, by which we can best be persuaded, for the time, that these characters in a play, are, soul and body, living creatures like ourselves" [34].

I should say that to persuade us that the characters in a play are living creatures like ourselves, is something that the prose dramatist can do more readily than the poet. Certainly, when I see Chekhov's *Three Sisters*,[51†] the characters seem to me to be living creatures like myself; and I am not even particularly conscious of their being Russian and not English-speaking people. What Shakespeare seems to ask me to do, and when I am in a sensitive enough mood makes me do, is to see through the ordinary classified emotions of our active life into a world of emotion and feeling beyond, of which I am not ordinarily aware. What he makes me feel is not so much that his characters are creatures like myself, but the converse – that I am a creature like his characters, taking part, like them, in no common action, of which I am for the most part quite unaware. And I suggest that a poet, once he has found his way into these strange lands of more than polar darkness and more than equatorial light,[52†] may gradually lose his interest in the ordinary planes of reality. His characters may come to be, in the ordinary sense, less real. But it will not be that he has fallen back; but that he has progressed into a world into which we cannot follow him. He will not have become less dramatic; he will have gone somewhere beyond the dramatic.

This theory, for what it is worth, I owe to brooding over *Lear*,[53] *Measure for Measure*, *Timon*, and *Troilus* on the one hand, and the group of late plays, what we may call after Wilson Knight the masque plays, on the other.[54†] And I think we may say of Shakespeare's later plays in general, that the interest comes to be less and less in the individual characters, on the immediate plane of human emotion, and more in a pattern of feeling of which the plot and characterisation exhibit, so to speak, only the under side.

We may take *Antony and Cleopatra* – there must be something a little arbitrary about the selection of any one play to mark such a point in Shakespeare's development – as the point at which the verse reaches complete achievement of conversational speech.[55] Of what the greatest of his followers – Webster – did in this way, we may say that it would not have

happened but for Shakespeare; of what his contemporaries did, that they could only do it in more humble domestic situations, and in flashes. In *Antony and Cleopatra* Shakespeare has it under command at every moment. There could be no play, indeed, in which such a mastery was so important; for there is no play in which a fusion of sordidness and magnificence is so essential a part of the pattern. The two chief characters are both, royal, magnificent and without dignity.[56†] They are the Antony who would

> reel the streets at noon and stand the buffet
> With knaves that smell of sweat[57]

and the Cleopatra who would

> Hop forty paces through the public street[58]

and in another context

> . . . commanded
> By such poor passion as the maid that milks
> And does the meanest chares.[59]

And the sordidness and the magnificence are not juxtaposed in violent contrast; they are, as I said, fused into one and the same thing. By touch after touch, sometimes in the words of Antony and Cleopatra themselves, sometimes in what others say about them. In no play is more suggestion conveyed constantly in a word or two, as when Caesar says of Antony

> Let the old ruffian know
> I have many other ways to die, meantime
> Laugh at his challenge.[60]

The verse speech is so perfectly modulated that it can, on occasion, be interpolated with prose without any incongruity. In Antony's dialogue with Enobarbus (Act I, sc. ii) Enobarbus speaks in prose, Antony in what might be either according to the context, though I think the words

> The business she hath broached in the state
> Cannot endure my absence.[61]

should be printed as verse. A short passage like

> Fulvia is dead.

– Sir?
Fulvia is dead.
– Fulvia!
Dead.[62]

is a model of such compactness, with behind it the beat of the hidden music which once in this play, as in several later plays, becomes at moments the music of the orchestra.[63†] And what I would remind you of is this: the direct descent of the language of *Antony and Cleopatra* from that of the Bastard in *King John*. Most people, I suppose, in selecting passages of great poetry, would prefer half a dozen pieces from plays by Marlowe, and pass the Bastard over. And at the same age, Marlowe must have appeared the greater poet: it is only in retrospect that we can see that something is missing in Marlowe, and that he might have repeated, but probably would never have excelled, the brilliance of plays which we have. Only the poet who can say the common things, as common men would say them in daily speech, can say the greatest things. There is a quality here which, it seems to me, only Chaucer, of all other English poets, shares to the highest degree with Shakespeare; and to these two men we owe our standards of English poetry.

Now, as in the later plays, the people appear superficially to be less real, so their speech appears superficially to be more set and poetical, less abounding in surprises. Constantly, in *Antony and Cleopatra*, one's astonishment might be expressed in the words: "I should never have thought that that could be said in poetry!" What one ought to think, in the later plays, is rather: "I should not have thought that that could be said at all"; and indeed we have to be at some pains to find out what Shakespeare is saying. I have been trying, since the beginning, to indicate rather than to define, what is "dramatic poetry" and I have taken the first speech of the Bastard as a kind of touchstone. It is this, rather than the verse of *Edward II* or *Richard II*. But that does not seem to take us any farther than *Antony and Cleopatra* or *Coriolanus*. The question of the excellence of Shakespeare's later verse as dramatic poetry, is bound up, of course, with this distinction which I have tried to make, between the dramatic and the ultra-dramatic. And of course, everything that a man has written, makes a difference to what he writes afterwards. Whatever you think of the later plays, you will admit, I hope, that the dramatic verse of the man who had written *Hamlet* and *Antony and Cleopatra* could never be of the same kind as that of

Beaumont and Fletcher; any more than his plots or characters could be put on the same level as those of these writers.

In using such terms as the dramatic and the ultra-dramatic, in Shakespeare's progress, and in speaking, for convenience, of the "later plays," it is well to be on guard against sharp distinctions. I do not mean that Shakespeare, having exhausted his interest in drama, turned to some other theatrical form – as a middle aged man may abandon tennis and take up golf. At the risk of being tiresome, I will insist again upon the continuity and unity of Shakespeare's work. The end is in a sense, implicit in the beginning; and the beginning is explained by the end.[64†] We actually, I think, can understand Hamlet the better for knowing Prospero, and so on. The whole work is a *Comédie Humaine* in a deeper sense than that of Balzac; it recalls Dante, whose *Inferno* you cannot understand until you have passed through to the end of the *Paradiso*. And certainly, in speaking of the last plays as ultra-dramatic, I do not wish to dismiss them from the stage; it is for us to try to educate ourselves until we can produce them and appreciate their production.

The personages in *Cymbeline*, *The Winter's Tale*, *The Tempest* and *Pericles* are the work of a writer who has finally seen through the dramatic action of men into a spiritual action which transcends it. There was always present – certainly from the period of *Romeo and Juliet* – the perception that emotions are not sharply definable "things," with hard outlines; that the specifically "human" emotion is an abstraction of action from a kind of continuum of emotion where the distinctions of individuality melt; and that there is a whole world of feeling of which most of us are unaware, and which would hardly seem to us "human" in any sense that we know. Dramatic action, in the ordinary sense, is inadequate for making these emotions perceptible. Shakespeare tends, therefore, to simplify his characters to make them vehicles for conveying something of which they are unaware. It is in those later plays that one becomes most conscious of the fact that we know neither what we do nor what we feel; and the recurrence of vision and dream, even in a set masque form, has a deep significance.

> 'Tis still a dream; or else such stuff as madmen
> Tongue, and brain not; either both, or nothing:
> Or senseless speaking, or a speaking such
> As sense cannot untie.[65]

The versification is not only as masterly and varied as ever: it develops new possibilities. The early power of word-play is still present, but capable of carrying much more subtle and profound meaning:

> Nobly he yokes
> A smiling with a sigh, as if the sigh
> Was that it was, for not being such a smile;
> The smile mocking the sigh, that it would fly
> From so divine a temple, to commix
> With winds that sailors rail at.[66]

Mr. Wilson Knight has done a useful service in pointing out the importance of recurring symbolism in all the plays from Shakespeare's maturity, and especially in the late plays. This analysis helps the mind to understand what is being done and why, but we must remember that the appreciation of these plays is not a matter of conscious enjoyment of each passage as it comes, but of a cumulative effect like a great piece of music. The term "musical pattern" which I first used, may now seem to be inadequate; because in a play of Shakespeare this is a pattern in which all the senses are used to convey something beyond sense – not only the sense of ear and eye, because, in reading *Pericles*, I have a sense of a pervading smell of seaweed throughout. Similarly, we do not arrive at an understanding of the play through the characters, but of the characters through the play. To compare Perdíta or Miranda or Imogen or Marina, with, for instance, Juliet, to call them by comparison insipid or unreal, is to use a wholly irrelevant standard. They belong in a world from which some emotions have been purified away, so that others, ordinarily invisible, may be made apparent. To my mind the finest of all the "recognition scenes" is Act V, sc. i of that very great play *Pericles*.[67] It is a perfect example of the "ultra-dramatic," a dramatic action of beings who are more than human. Shakespeare's consummate dramatic skill is as bright as ever; his verse is as much speech as ever: only, it is the speech of creatures who are more than human, or rather, seen in a light more than that of day.

> I am a maid,
> My lord, that ne'er before invited eyes,
> But have been gazed on like a comet: she speaks,
> My lord, that, may be, hath endured a grief
> Might equal yours, if both were justly weighed.[68]

The two voices, Pericles and Marina, are perfectly harmonised:

> Now, blessing on thee! rise; thou art my child.
> Give me fresh garments. Mine own, Helicanus:
> She is not dead at Tarsus, as she should have been,
> By savage Cleon.[69]

The "Give me fresh garments" emphasised presently by "Give me my robes" [l. 233] has great significance. The scene becomes a ritual; the poetic drama developed to its highest point turns back towards liturgy: and the scene could end in no other way than by the vision of Diana.

I should like, in closing, to recapitulate what, in two hours' time, I have been trying to do. It is equally important, in what can be only a footnote to a vast subject, to leave the audience in no doubt as what one has not been trying to do. Throughout I have been trying to manipulate two strands of thought: one, dealing with the question of which are the most popular plays and why; the other dealing with the nature of "dramatic verse" and Shakespeare's gradual perfecting of his form of it. It appears that the verse of Shakespeare's later plays, and some of the less popular plays of his maturity, is no less great as dramatic verse than that of what are called the "great" plays. We are led to conclude that Shakespeare does not reach the highest point with three or four tragedies, and thereafter decline; but that the right attitude toward his later plays is something quite different. It comes to seem inevitable and right that Shakespeare, after his greatest successes, should proceed into regions into which the audience cannot follow. The distinction which I have used, "dramatic" and "ultra-dramatic," is not altogether satisfactory, because I have really been using the term "dramatic" in two senses: one in which it is contrasted with the "ultra-dramatic," and another which comprehends both. We need, I think, to keep in mind that there are two standards of dramatic "success," one that which is limited by the capacity of the audience – which remains fairly constant while civilisation is maintained – and another which does not recognise this limit. And even if you persist in maintaining that the later plays are "failures," still it is essential to keep clear how different a kind of failure they are from the immature plays. At least, Shakespeare succeeded in doing what he set himself to do. That any of the less popular plays could be made as popular as the popular ones, would be folly to expect: but if we recognise that the failure is in ourselves we shall have gone a long way. And, in insisting upon the unity of Shakespeare's work from beginning to end, I should like to add

another consideration. I do not mean that the application of my terms "dramatic" and "ultra-dramatic" to Shakespeare's work divides it into two groups of plays: I mean that what was latent in his early work comes to the foreground in his later; and that without his success in the "dramatic" he could never have found the way to what lies beyond it; just as I suggest that it is the dramatist in Shakespeare that makes him a great poet, as much as it is the poet in him that makes him a great dramatist. When drama is no longer contained in verse, there is a loss to poetry as well as to drama.[70†]

There is another point I should like to make in closing. I said at the beginning that I venture to talk about Shakespeare, not pretending to be a Shakespeare scholar, but as a workman in verse: and the interest of the workman is always in what can be done next, it is centred in the immediate future and not in the past. Whether verse is better than prose for drama is a question with which I am not concerned: all that matters to me is that verse must mean a different kind of drama from prose; that if some things can be done better in prose, others equally dramatic can be done better in verse, and that therefore the absence of verse – and I mean verse which is poetry – is a great loss to the stage. But I am equally sure that the absence of the stage is a great loss to the poet. The function of the poet is not solely social: it is the vocation of some to write darkly for the understanding of only a few individuals scattered through space and time; but the discipline of communication, of having to try to enchant with poetry a large, mixed and unprepared audience, to try to produce an immediate effect, of the success or failure of which he is made immediately aware – this is most valuable. And if the poet can do this, and at the same time produce dramatic verse which will be the delight of generations both on the stage and for private reading and meditation, and finally write for himself rather than for any audience, then he is a very great poet indeed; and in the English language, is probably no one but Shakespeare.[71]

NOTES

1. The original introduction for the Edinburgh lectures appeared as follows:

"To talk about Shakespeare at all is a rash attempt on the part of one who has neither the authority of scholarship nor that of dramatic experience. It has always been something that I wanted to do sooner or later, but the time has seemed always too soon. I have again and again decided to defer it until I had a year in which to read or re-read innumerable commentaries. That time does not seem likely to arrive; and the motive is not wholly noble. For it is first the fear of being caught out in ignorance, and second the fear of saying what has already

been said better by someone else. I must face both those terrors, in the hope that among much that is false and much that has already been observed, I may happen to let fall a few remarks of original though modest value. To get one interesting thought out of an hour's talk, is all that any experienced lecture-goer should hope for. And I will say in my own defence, that if I am more and more out of touch with Shakespeare scholarship as the years go by, I have become somewhat more familiar with the plays themselves, and try to see them whenever they are produced.

"One needs a springboard for a plunge like this, and I will take a recent statement by an author who has written of Shakespeare with great authority, Mr. Granville-Barker. In his Romanes Lecture this year, 'On Poetry in Drama,' he says: 'Some poets may have proved poor dramatists enough; but what great dramatist has not been a poet? But, if poets are born, dramatists are made. For playwriting is a craft as well as an art, and a craft must be learnt.'"

2. The actor, manager, and playwright Harley Granville-Barker (1877-1946), further distinguished as a Shakespearean critic and producer, had included TSE's "Shakespearian Criticism I. From Dryden to Coleridge" in his edition of *A Companion to Shakespeare Studies* (1934) (5.67). At this time Granville-Barker was continuing to write and publish his *Prefaces to Shakespeare* (1927-45). TSE errs in addressing him as "Sir Harley"; he was never knighted.

3. G. Wilson Knight's *The Wheel of Fire* (1930), for which TSE wrote the Introduction (4.145). In his Preface, Knight made a similar acknowledgement: "Especially am I sensible of the great generosity of Mr. T. S. Eliot in helping this book toward publication and in writing its introduction" (vii-viii).

4. The Romanes Lectures were created in 1891 as Oxford University's annual public lecture by an eminent artist, scientist, or literary figure. Granville-Barker's lecture, delivered at the Taylor Institution on 4 June 1937, was subsequently published as a pamphlet, *On Poetry in Drama* (London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1937), pp. 42; here 39.

5. Shakespeare's poem *Venus and Adonis* was written in 1592-93, printed in quarto in 1593. As TSE traces the development of Shakespeare's versification, the works discussed are here dated by the editors variously by composition, entry in the Stationers' Register, first performance, and first printing.

6. *Troilus and Cressida*, entered on the Stationers' Register on 7 Feb 1603, first printed in 1609; *Measure for Measure*, first performed in 1604, printed in the First Folio of 1623; *Timon of Athens*, first performed 1607-08, printed in the First Folio.

7. *The Winter's Tale*, first performed in 1611, printed in the First Folio; *Pericles*, first performed 1608-09, printed in quarto 1609.

8. *Hamlet*, first performed 1600-01, first printed 1603.

9. *Richard III*, composed 1592-93, first printed 1597, first recorded performance 1600-01; *Richard II*, composed ca. 1595, first printed 1597, first recorded performance 1601.

The following two paragraphs were written for the later, Bristol University presentation and do not appear as part of the first Edinburgh lecture.

10. TSE first discusses his concept of double planes of reality in dramatic and fictional texts in "A Neglected Aspect of Chapman" (1924) (2.548).

11. *Romeo and Juliet*, composed 1594-95, first printed in quarto 1597; *Macbeth*, composed ca. 1606, first performed 1611, first printed in First Folio; *Othello*, composed 1602, first performed

1604, first printed in quarto 1622; *Julius Caesar*, composed 1599, first performed 1600, first printed in First Folio.

12. *Henry V*, composed 1598-99, first printed 1600; *Twelfth Night*, composed ca. 1600-01, first performed 1602, first printed in First Folio; *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, composed 1594-95, entered in Stationers' Register 1600, first printed in quarto 1600; *The Merchant of Venice*, composed ca. 1595-96, entered in Stationers' Register 1598, first printed in quarto 1600; first recorded performance 1605; *Much Ado about Nothing*, composed 1598, entered in Stationers' Register 1600, first printed in quarto 1600; *As You Like It*, composed 1599-1600, entered in Stationers' Register 1600, first printed in First Folio.

13. *The Tempest*, composed and performed 1611, first printed in First Folio; *The Taming of the Shrew*, composed ca. 1592-93, first performed 1594, first printed in First Folio; *The Comedy of Errors*, composed ca. 1594, first performed 1594, first printed in First Folio.

14. *Henry IV*, composed 1596-97, first performed 1597, first printed in quarto 1598.

15. A comic drama by William Congreve (1670-1729), first performed and published in 1700.

16. III.v.68 (Vindice to Hippolito); TSE discusses *The Revenger's Tragedy* in "Cyril Tourneur" (1930) (4.197) and in "*The Revenger's Tragedy*: A Note by T. S. Eliot" (5.463).

17. V.v.17 (Macbeth to Seyton, continuing: "There would have been a time for such a word, / Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow / Creeps in this petty pace from day to day, / To the last syllable of recorded time, / And all our yesterdays have lighted fools / The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!")

18. III.i.5-41

19. TSE alludes to Knight's discussion of the personal pattern in Shakespeare's plays in *The Wheel of Fire*, of which TSE wrote in his Introduction: "To interpret, then, or to seek to pounce upon the secret, to elucidate the pattern and pluck out the mystery, of a poet's work, is 'no less an instinct.' . . . But I confess that reading [Wilson Knight's] essays seems to me to have enlarged my understanding of the Shakespeare pattern; which, after all, is quite the main thing. . . . More particularly, I think that [he] has shown insight in pursuing his search for the pattern below the level of 'plot' and 'character.' . . . This sort of work must be done to prepare for the search for the real pattern" (4.148-50).

20*. TSE's marginal holograph note in Bristol text: "Sometimes one & sometimes the other; sc. [namely] 18c Pope & Milton vs 17c late metaphysicals"

21†. Marlowe was mis-typed as "Mallott"

22. Matthew 26:11: "For ye have the poor always with you" (KJV)

23. *Edward II* II.ii.182-87

24. Scene xiv.40-43 (Faustus alone, before the Devils arrive to take him away)

25. *The Duchess of Malfi* V.v.1-7 (The Cardinal, with a book, before Bosola and servant enter with Antonio's body)

26. I.i.184-89 (The Bastard, Philip Faulconbridge, illegitimate son of Richard the Lionheart); *King John*, composed ca. 1596, first performed 1596-97; first printed in First Folio.

27. In *Shakespeare* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1936), Murry argues that "The Bastard dominates *King John*; he represents England against the vagaries and the viciousness of its titular king" (123). Murry discusses his importance at length in chapter VII, "Shakespeare and England" (155-69). In his review of the book, TSE writes: "What strikes me with particular force and novelty in the first part of the book is the author's discovery – the term is merited – of what

he calls 'the Shakespeare man' and of the peculiar significance of the Bastard Falconbridge in *King John*" (5.389).

28†. In Edinburgh: it its versification

29. V.ii.865. (Biron to Rosaline); *Love's Labour's Lost*, composed ca. 1593-94, first performance 1597, first printed in quarto 1598.

30. II.i.496-500; *read*: "I do, my lord, and in her eye I find / A wonder," (Lewis to King Philip, in the hearing of the Bastard)

31. *Richard III* I.iv.44-47 (Clarence to Brakenbury, in the Tower)

32. *King John* IV.iii.79 (the Bastard to Lord Salisbury)

33. I.ii.59 (Othello to Iago, Roderigo, and Brabantio)

34. TSE likely derived this notion from Murry: "The blank-verse of the Bastard in *King John*, of the Nurse in *Romeo and Juliet*, of Hotspur in *Henry IV*, Part I, of Anthony in *Julius Caesar* are as different as they are dramatically appropriate" (*Shakespeare*, 118-19).

35. *Romeo and Juliet* I.v.29-36 (Capulet, talking with an old man of the Capulet family)

36. *Romeo and Juliet* I.iv.96 (Mercutio to Romeo)

37. *Romeo and Juliet* I.iv.99 (Mercutio to Romeo)

38. *Hamlet* I.i.146 (Marcellus to Bernardo and Horatio)

39. II.ii.15-17 (Romeo, to Juliet at her balcony window)

40. ll. 119-20; *read*: "Too like the lightning,"

41. l. 23 (Marcellus to Horatio and Bernardo)

42. l. 46 (Horatio to Ghost)

43. ll. 62-63 (Horatio to Marcellus)

44. ll. 143-44 (Marcellus to Horatio and Bernardo)

45. ll. 157-60 (Marcellus to Horatio and Bernardo)

46. ll. 165-68 (Horatio to Marcellus and Bernardo)

47†. In Edinburgh: "and that he turns off abruptly"

48. TSE writes in "Hamlet" (1919): "So far from being Shakespeare's masterpiece, [*Hamlet*] is most certainly an artistic failure. . . . *Coriolanus* may not be as 'interesting' as *Hamlet*, but it is, with *Antony and Cleopatra*, Shakespeare's most assured artistic success" (2.124). An even more explicit statement appeared in the original review but was cut in *The Sacred Wood*: "Hamlet is a failure" (2.128 n.21).

49. In "Hamlet" TSE discusses and quotes from the critical views of Elmer Edgar Stoll's *Hamlet: An Historical and Comparative Study* (1919) and J. M. Robertson's *The Problem of "Hamlet"* (1919) (2.122-24).

50†. In Edinburgh: "The two later plays are"

51†. In Edinburgh: "when I see a play by Chekhov,"

52†. In Edinburgh: "more than natural darkness and more than solar light"

53. *King Lear*, composed 1605-06, first performed 1606, printed in quarto 1608.

54†. In Edinburgh: "what we may call the masque plays, on the other."

55. *Antony and Cleopatra*, composed ca.1606-07, first performed 1607, first printed in First Folio.

56†. In Edinburgh: "undignified."

57. I.iv.20-21 (Caesar to Lepidus)

58. II.ii.234 (Enobarbus to Agrippa: "I saw her once / Hop forty paces through the public street"). TSE previously quoted the lines in "Wilkie Collins and Dickens" (1927) (3.166).

59. IV.xv.73-75 (Cleopatra to Charmain and Iras)

60. IV.i.4-6 (Caesar to Macaenas)

61. I.ii.178-79 (Antony to Enobarbus)

62. I.ii.162-66 (Antony to Enobarbus)

63†. In Edinburgh: "becomes at a moment audible."

64†. In Edinburgh: "and the end, furthermore, explains the beginning."

65. *Cymbeline* V.iv.145-48 (Posthumus, emerging from a sleep which has brought the vision of Jupiter, and after reading a book that contains the prophecy laid on him). *Cymbeline*, composed ca. 1609-11, first performed 1611, first printed in First Folio.

66. *Cymbeline* IV.ii.52-57 (Arviragus to Guiderius)

67. In "John Ford" (1930) TSE points to Wilson Knight's study of Shakespeare's recognition scenes in *Myth and Miracle* (1929), which he read in manuscript. "In Shakespeare's plays," TSE writes of such scenes, "this is primarily the recognition of a long-lost daughter, secondarily of a wife; and we can hardly read the later plays attentively without admitting that the father-and-daughter theme was one of very deep symbolic value to him in his productive years: Perdita, Marina and Miranda share some beauty of which his earlier heroines do not possess the secret" (4.475).

68. V.i.85-89 (Marina to Pericles)

69. V.i.213-16 (Pericles to Marina); TSE draws upon this recognition scene in his poem "Marina" (1930), in which his persona assumes the voice of Pericles: "What seas what shores what grey rocks and what islands / What water lapping the bow / And scent of pine and the woodthrush singing through the fog / What images return / O my daughter" (*CPP* 109 / *Poems1* 107-08).

70†. This sentence was added to the Bristol text in TSE's hand.

71. This concluding paragraph was not included in the Edinburgh text.

TEXTUAL NOTE

1. The typescripts (carbon) of the two untitled and undated Edinburgh lectures, each paginated [1]-20, are in the Houghton Library: bMS Am 1691 (32); archivally titled "Shakespeare as poet and dramatist"; gift of Emily Hale. The typescripts of the lectures revised and expanded for delivery at Bristol University, titled "The Development of Shakespeare's Verse," are in the King's College Library, Hayward Bequest (P7); lecture I paginated [1]-20 with new introduction and paragraph insertions; lecture II paginated [1]-20; unnumbered final page [21] with new concluding paragraph; holograph emendations by TSE; TSE's placement of titles of works by Shakespeare and other authors in full caps, unpunctuated in both the Edinburgh and Bristol texts, has been standardized; there are some initialed marginal remarks and suggested textual emendations by FVM (Frank Vigor Morley); on a cover sheet for the separately typed insertions (Eliot Estate), TSE titled them "Development of Shakespeare's Versification" by hand.

A Commentary

The Criterion: A Literary Review, 17 (Oct 1937) 81-86

I have lately been considering a manifesto which reached me some time ago, but to which at the time I did not give sufficient attention. It is the prefatory statement to a catalogue of the 1937 Exhibition of the "Unity of Artists for Peace, Democracy and Cultural Development."[1]

For Peace, for Democracy, for Cultural Progress.[2] "To many people," the preface explains, "that banner will seem irrelevant or unnecessary. All sane people, they may say, are for peace; all liberal-minded men are in favour of democracy; and certainly everyone who takes an interest in the Arts must wish to encourage cultural progress. Why, then, an Association to uphold these principles? And, furthermore, why an international association of artists at all? Surely Art is everywhere recognised as international. . . ." What gives these sentences their clinical interest for a commentary is what also renders them difficult to comment upon: the accumulation of assumptions, so that it is not easy to determine what proposition depends upon which. We note first that the author feels it necessary to excuse himself only to those to whom the "banner" of "Peace, Democracy, and Cultural Progress" seems "irrelevant or unnecessary." He does not think it necessary to explain himself to those to whom this "banner" seems either meaningless or suspect. Such people, perhaps, are not "people" at all – they can only be the enemy. Even those of us who are not addressed, can agree that all "sane" people are for peace – except when there is a conflict between peace and some higher value – or except when there is a conflict between peace and some more immediate interest. And we might allow that all liberal-minded men are in favour of democracy. But we need not agree that (as seems to be assumed) all good (or as the author might say "sane") men are liberal-minded; and if there are good men who are not liberal-minded, then the fact that all liberal-minded men are in favour of democracy is not enough to prove that democracy is an absolute good. There is further the assumption that artists are liberal-minded (if they are not liberal-minded they are probably bad artists). For artists, if they have the wit to see what is to their interest, must be in favour of democracy. Artists require, the writer thinks, "a state of society which acknowledges the right of men and women to pursue

their individual tasks in peace: a state of society compatible only with what we call democracy." I am not sure what the author has in mind; for, assuming that everybody has an individual task and knows what it is, I should suppose that the right to pursue it should not be limited to artists, but should be extended to everyone. It is as disagreeable for the ordinary stockbroker or workman to be conscripted into waging war as it is for the artist. What democracy frequently does, is to allow the artist, or self-supposed artist, to pursue his self-imposed task in peace, at the price of starving. What the artist really requires is a state of society that demands what he has to give, and will give him sufficient recompense to enable him to carry on his work.[3] And I doubt whether "democracy," or any other *abstract* form of government, will ensure this livelihood.

And what is cultural progress? Is it the development of a society in which the "artist" will be in greater and greater demand? Is it a development of society such that every exhibit in the exhibition of the Unity of Artists for Peace, Democracy and Cultural Development will be sold at a good price? or in which every poet will make enough money to buy a small car and a wireless set? I cannot object to "cultural progress," because I do not know what it means. I can, however, object to one sentence: "Surely Art is everywhere recognised as international." Perhaps modern art is international, and if so, that may help to account for its weakness. I cannot think of art as either national or international – these, after all, are modern terms – but as racial and local; and an art which is not representative of a particular people, but "international," or an art which does not represent a particular civilization, but only an abstract civilization-in-general, may lose its sources of vitality. I have not the right to speak for anything but the art of literature: there, it is obvious that the limitation of a particular language is the condition of a writer doing anything at all. It is possible that to be completely bi-lingual would be a handicap to a man of letters: for to know two languages equally well makes complete intimacy with either more difficult. In any case, the term "international" seems to me to belong to politics, and not to art.

Any attempt to determine the political conditions necessary for the successful cultivation of "art" is likely to turn out to express only the slightly disguised political sympathies of a particular group of "artists." No one can object to "artists" banding themselves together for the purpose of advancing political tendencies with which they sympathize; but they can only legitimately do this as human beings, or at most as representatives of a

particular movement in art: they have no claim to speak in the name of "Art" in general. There are artists of equal distinction holding opposite political views, and there are some who are not interested in politics at all. Whatever their views, it is not their distinction as artists, but only their general intelligence, that gives them authority to hold and propagate political views.

The temper of a statement such as that which I have been discussing is clearly that of the amiable liberalism which in its diffusion has become the political religion of England; and which, whether it has a bias to the right, or, as more frequently and in the present instance, a slight bias to the left, has little relation to events on the continent. I am far from suggesting that any continental "ideology" should be taken over in this country; only that the native one should be brought more up to date, with a more realistic appreciation of the forces at work. The term "democracy" must continue to be used, because it is sacred to the British mind; and it will continue to be used by people whose activities are really directed towards one kind of oligarchy or another – the kind of oligarchy you happen to prefer will always be the one which is "democracy." I fear that the groups of "artists" who engage in political affirmations may bring about for themselves just the opposite of what they intend: instead of influencing political directions they may merely be cutting themselves off from the world of events.

I have said that "Cultural Progress," as used in this manifesto, is a term to which I can attach no meaning. Any change will seem good to somebody, and no change will seem good to everybody. The cultural progress to be imposed upon the Basutos (see a letter by Bishop Carey, in *The Times* newspaper for July 12) is not at all to the liking of the Basutos.[4] At present, under the benevolent government of Queen Victoria, the Basuto enjoys some of the benefits demanded by the Unity of Artists for Peace, Democracy and Cultural Development:[5] for he has the "right to pursue his individual task in peace."[6] But the Basuto, though happy, has an inadequate notion of his individual task – his notion is to do as little work as possible. And he has no conception whatever of Cultural Progress: "his fields are full of khaki-boss, the poisonous weed: the erosion is frightful: wells are not dug nor water preserved: the cultivation is still primitive to the last degree." And if the Basuto came under the control of the South African Government, "things would be done more drastically and efficiently in the opinion of many good judges." The Basuto would have Cultural Progress, but perhaps a little less Democracy.

Another instance of what may be called Cultural Progress has lately appeared; which, as it does not concern the remote Basutos but ourselves in England, should make more impression upon the public. I read with considerable misgiving the manifesto of the Poet Laureate and his friends, issued as a letter in *The Times* of June 8 under the heading "Art in the Inn."[7] Tempting as the occasion is, I will not divert attention to the lamentable deterioration of public-house architecture and decoration in the last few years, but stick to the point.[8] Mr. Masefield proposes nothing less than making use of the country public-house for "verse-speaking, drama, and readings of prose, and thus encouraging a wider appreciation of our language and literature in its higher forms." I have no doubt a narrow self-interest in this matter, no more enlightened than that of the idle Basuto: for I have always thought of the public-house as one of the few places to which one could escape from "verse-speaking, drama, and readings of prose." I am not comforted by being told that "the verse or prose . . . would always be chosen for its fine quality." I am appalled at the thought of turning into the saloon bar at five-thirty for quiet refreshment, and finding that it has been converted into a *Poets' Pub*, reverberating, like an African village, with the roll of "Drake's Drum."[9] Nor would the concentration required for shove ha'penny[10] be improved by the incursion of Comus and his crew, even offering

> this cordial Julep here
> That flames, and dances in his crystal bounds
> With spirits of balm, and fragrant Syrops mixt[11]

with the best BBC enunciation. If the public-house is to fall into the hands of the English Association and the British Drama League, where, one must ask bluntly, is a man to go for a drink?[12]

I am quite well aware of the needs of the new housing estates for the formation of community life; and of the needs of the country villages, whence the feudal system has disappeared with nothing to replace it, villages in which the more enterprising young people think only of escape to the large towns. I believe that local activities such as amateur production of plays should certainly be stimulated. Nevertheless, Mr. Masefield's proposal of poetry for the million just has the wrong smell. The mention of the English Association is anything but reassuring, if the English Association's appreciation of poetry is to be judged by the anthologies it puts out. The spectre of the old liberal panacea of more education for everybody lurks in the background.[13] I suspect that two distinct intentions,

both laudable, have been confused. One is, that there should be a public for poetry. But what is important is not that this public should be large, but that it should be sensitive, critical and educated – conditions only possible for a small public. The other intention is, that people should be made happier, and be given the best life of which they are capable. I doubt whether poetry can be made to serve this purpose for the populace; if it ever does, it will never come as a result of centralized planning.

T. S. E.

NOTES

1. Founded in 1933 by left-wing illustrators, designers, and painters, the Artists' International Association organized its third exhibit, "Unity of Artists for Peace, Democracy and Cultural Development," held at 41, Grosvenor Square from 14 Apr to 5 May 1937. The catalogue for the exhibition features a foreword signed by "Y. C."; it describes the participants as "progressive artists from all countries" (3).

2. These words appear in quotation marks as the opening of the brief "Foreword" (3) and presumably refer to the motto inscribed on the banner which flew over the third exhibit.

3. According to the author of the foreword, the first two conditions that are "favourable to the artist's life" are political peace and a state in which individuals are allowed to "pursue their individual tasks in peace." A third condition that promotes the life of the artist is "that in which society sets store by his contribution, measuring its own health by the vigour and vitality of its culture" (3).

4. "The Protectorate Natives / Lazy Happiness or Efficiency? / Case of the Transkei," a letter to the editor of the *Times* of 12 July 1937, is signed "Walter Carey, late Bishop of Bloemfontein (with Basutoland). Eastbourne College, July 10" (13). The Rt. Rev. Walter Julius Carey (1875-1955) was an international rugby player, then military chaplain, theologian, and Anglican bishop.

5. "In the interior among primitive people I found that the name of Queen Victoria is very much alive. She remains the symbol of liberty and protection to the natives. The Basuto is a very engaging and carefree person who wants to be let alone to enjoy himself in his own way in his wide and glorious country" (13).

6. Here TSE condenses the quotation he cites earlier from the foreword to "Unity of Artists for Peace, Democracy and Cultural Development."

7. "Art in the Inn / Halls for Readings and Drama / An Oxford Experiment," a letter to the editor of the *Times* of 8 June 1937, is signed by John Masefield and fourteen others (17). Masefield (1878-1967) had been appointed Poet Laureate in 1930, in which position he served until his death.

8. TSE's complaint about public-house architecture contradicts the opening of Masefield's letter: "Sir, – You have lately remarked on the improved publichouses and inns up and down the country, which are a feature of our changing England. . . . There are now many improved houses with large rooms or halls which challenge a search for the uses to which they can be put" (17).

9. Sir Henry Newbolt's popular poem, "Drake's Drum" (1897), tells the legend of Sir Francis Drake's battle drum, which was brought back to England after his death. The sound of the drum portends Drake's return from the dead to protect his country.

10. Popular in pubs, "shove ha'penny" is a shuffleboard game played on a table rather than on the ground; halfpennies are the discs that are shoved, by the hand, into the grooves of the board.

11. Milton, *Comus* (*A Mask Presented at Ludlow Castle, 1634*), *The Poetical Works of John Milton*, ed. Rev. H. C. Beeching (London: Oxford UP, 1928), ll. 672-74.

12. Masefield writes: "And we are fortunate in having won sympathetic interest not only from a sufficient number of owners and publichouses, but also from the English Association and the British Drama League" (17). TSE skewers the aims and standards of the English Association, in particular its anthologies of poetry, in his *Criterion* "Commentary" of July 1934 (5.99). On 18 Mar 1936, TSE turned down an invitation to speak at an exhibition undertaken by the British Drama League. In a letter of 22 Apr 1938, he complained about the organization in a letter to Ashley Dukes: "I have a strong objection to giving my name to anything in which I play no active part – and by the way, my conscience is not particularly happy about the British Drama League."

13. TSE discusses the problems of extending education and raising the school age in "Modern Education and the Classics" (5.338).

An Anglican Platonist: The Conversion of Elmer More

An unsigned review of *Pages from an Oxford Diary*, by Paul Elmer More

Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP; London: Oxford UP, 1937.
Sections I-XXXIV, unpaginated.[1]

The Times Literary Supplement, 1865 (30 Oct 1937) 792

This little posthumous book is not quite what it at first appears to be. A rapid glance would give the impression that it was a series of religious meditations or *pensées* by a devout layman; but it is not quite that; and in these matters the "not quite" marks a difference of kind. To appreciate the nature of this book one needs to know something of the life of Paul Elmer More and of his works. Readers who have this acquaintance should possess themselves also of this book, which is the nearest approach to a personal confession that could be expected from so reserved a man as More. Others should read several of his larger works before they attempt it.

More wrote a number of books of great importance; but what is of the *first* importance is not any particular book or books, but the witness of the whole life-work of a great and good man – a testimony of a different nature from that of his intimate friend Irving Babbitt. During the greater part of his life his name was bracketed with Babbitt's; the two men were isolated in the American society of their time; and indeed Babbitt, in a University life which was taking, as it still takes, a direction contrary to that which he approved, seemed more isolated than More in the literary world of New York. But in later years, when Babbitt had become famous and the disciples of "Humanism" had gone out from Harvard to spread the gospel in other universities, it was More who appeared the lonelier figure. For he had turned to a still more solitary road, that of Anglican orthodoxy.

More's early education was received in the schools and University (Washington University) of St. Louis, Missouri. His religious up-bringing, from which he early rebelled, was that of an antiquated and provincial American Presbyterianism. He distinguished himself as a classical scholar,

and for several years was Greek master in a local school. It is possible that one or two elder scholars in St. Louis gave him his first curiosity about Indian philosophy and Sanskrit literature. A little later, two graduate students at Harvard, Paul More and Irving Babbitt, were toiling over Sanskrit and Pali with equal ardour: this and other common interests – as well as common distrust of the tendencies of modern education – brought the two men together. Babbitt continued in a university career, in which he was treated for many years sometimes with hostility and usually with neglect. More, after two years of solitary reading and thought in the remote New Hampshire village of Shelburne, eventually became literary editor of the New York *Nation*, then in its prime: for some years the *Boston Evening Transcript*, the *Atlantic Monthly*, and the *Nation* provided the political and literary opinions of all cultivated New Englanders. During this period More wrote most of the articles collected in a number of volumes known as "The Shelburne Essays." After his retirement from literary journalism he lived at Princeton, New Jersey, where, in Princeton University, he took small classes of classical men in Greek philosophy; and he became a frequent visitor to Oxford. It was during this later period that he produced his greatest work; and his gradual conversion to Christianity is to be traced through the four volumes of *The Greek Tradition*, two supplementary volumes, *Platonism* and *The Catholic Faith*, and three more volumes of Shelburne essays (*New Shelburne Essays*), in which he is preoccupied with religion rather than with literature.[2]

It is as a contemporary witness to Christianity and to Anglicanism that More remains of the first importance. But his eventual Anglicanism cannot be evaluated without reference to the process by which he arrived at it: the volumes mentioned above should all be read, and in order, as an account of a spiritual pilgrimage as well as for their objective value. His faith remains to the end rather personal and individualistic; and that is why we said at the beginning that the book before us cannot be taken as a manual of devotion. We would not venture to say that More's reading of theology came late in life, but certainly his understanding of it did; and his theological learning, which was great, strikes us as the learning of a lonely man – one who learnt from books and solitary thought, rather than from communication with living theologians. His faith is coloured by two influences: first, his lifelong Platonism, which gave him a bias towards the Greek fathers rather than the Latin, and, second, a passion for England, and especially for Oxford, as

strong as that of Irving Babbitt for France and Paris. Had Babbitt ever been converted he could only, we believe, have been converted to Rome. More was naturally a convert to Canterbury. He appears at moments more Anglican than Anglicanism; and at times (as in his introduction to the compendium of seventeenth-century theology, *Anglicanism*, which he edited with Dr. F. L. Cross) almost seems to assume that the English Church began with the Reformation.[3] Accordingly, while he is in general a sound and safe guide, he is at times narrow (as in his treatment of the mysticism of St. John of the Cross in *The Catholic Faith*) and at times downright heterodox, as in his treatment of the Doctrine of the Eucharist. Such discussion as that of the R. P. de la Taille or Dom Vonier would have seemed to him legalistic and even presumptuous,[4] and he praises the theology of Anglicanism for affirming the Real Presence and refusing to attempt to define Its actuality further:

> There is more of wisdom as well as of modesty in the position of our great Anglican divines who, from the days of Henry VIII to the present, have resolutely refrained from analysing the operation of the sacrament, and have held its efficacy a mystery to be felt and not expounded. [Section XXX]

But the man who can go on to say "Nor do I personally care to be a partaker in the Communion" [Section XXX] has surely some cardinal error fundamental to his whole doctrine of the Eucharistic Sacrifice. And one cannot help feeling that – as is not surprising in a lonely and self-taught theologian – More had an inadequate conception of the divine nature of the Church as the Living Body of Christ.

There is one other limitation, of a different order, to More's presentation of the Christian Faith. It seems to us that the demons of doubt or atheism whom More overcame were those powers and principalities operant in his youth, rather than those of to-day. It is not so much against contemporary lack of faith that his force is directed, as against the scepticism of the later nineteenth century which he had himself lived through. But that is only to say that he did one thing and not another; and that there is other work to be done than what he did. And scattered through this book, as through all his others, are sentences of a wisdom and understanding of life which is very rare to-day. We will end with one sentence inspired by Oxford as seen through his imaginative love of that University, which has more pertinence than the effusion of Matthew Arnold:[5]

> Though we have pretty well forgotten that etymologically "school" means "leisure," nevertheless the very foundation and function of a university is to provide a place where a society of scholars may withdraw for the uninterrupted pursuit of the contemplative life. [Section XXVI]

NOTES

1. More's posthumous *Pages from an Oxford Diary*, his only piece of autobiography outside his "Marginalia" (1936) (5.420); More states in the Preface that the text was written in 1924-25 and that the sections, "though fictitious in their setting, were the transcription of a very real experience in my life." TSE's search for a publisher at the time was unsuccessful because More insisted that it be published anonymously. This review is TSE's third piece on More in the year of his death, following "Paul Elmer More" (5.418) and a *Criterion* "Commentary" (5.504).

2. TSE stated in his 1929 review of *The Demon of the Absolute* (1928), the first volume of More's *New Shelburne Essays*: "The demon of the absolute is for Mr. More the spirit of heresy in all things: the human craving for unification which will push any theory to the extreme" (3.585). The list of "Other Works of the Same Author" in *Pages from an Oxford Diary* shows that the contents of *The Greek Tradition* had been reconceived, from five volumes to four: I. *The Religion of Plato* (second edition); II. *Hellenistic Properties*; III. *The Christ of the New Testament*; IV. *Christ the Word*. Listed as "Complementary Volumes" are *Platonism* (third edition) and *The Catholic Faith*. See "Paul Elmer More" for comparison with the previous five-volume edition and for the list of the *New Shelburne Essays* (5.421-22, nn. 4, 11).

3. Subtitle: *The Thought and Practice of the Church of England: Illustrated from the Religious Literature of the Seventeenth Century* (London: S.P.C.K., 1935). TSE discussed and quoted from this book in "Views and Reviews [II]" (1935) (5.255-56).

4. Dom Anscar Vonier (1875-1938) – Catholic priest, theologian, and Abbot of Buckfast Abbey, Devon, and author of *A Key to the Doctrine of the Eucharist* (1925). In his most famous theological tract, Vonier was responding to various questions regarding the nature of the Eucharist, sacrament, and sacrifice, and was creating a fuller theological context, as were many other Catholic theologians of the time, for the papal decree *Sacra Tridentina Synodus* (1905) which had urged a more frequent reception of communion. *Mysterium Fidei* [*The Mystery of Faith* (1921)], an earlier study by the French Jesuit R. P. Maurice de la Taille, S.J. (1872-1933), had argued for a continuity that began with the Last Supper, continued in the sacrifice on the cross, and extends into the sacramental presentation in the Mass. Vonier thought that such a formulation of unity was artificially engineered; he argued, by contrast, that the natural reality of the sacrifice of Christ on the cross and the sacramental reality of the Eucharist were in effect the same reality, though expressed in two different modes. The key of Vonier's explanation of doctrine is that the Eucharist is not a ritual, or sign, that points to a meaning residing elsewhere; rather, the sign of the Eucharist accomplishes the very thing that it signifies. In such an understanding of sacramental theology, by participating in the Eucharistic sacrifice, the Church does not merely point to the reality of Christ but becomes the living Body of Christ.

5. TSE alludes to Arnold's description of Oxford in the "Sweetness and Light" chapter of *Culture and Anarchy* (London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1869): "Yet we in Oxford, brought up amidst the beauty and sweetness of that beautiful place, have not failed to seize one truth: – the truth that beauty and sweetness are essential characters of a complete human perfection. When I insist on this, I am all in the faith and tradition of Oxford" (35).

A retrospective review of *The Lion and the Fox: The Rôle of the Hero in the Plays of Shakespeare*, by Wyndham Lewis

London: Grant Richards, 1927. Pp. 326

Twentieth Century Verse, No. 6/7 (Nov/Dec 1937) [6-9][1]

The Lion and the Fox is a book which, like some other of Mr. Lewis's works, deals with several subjects; and the fact that it is concerned nominally (or sub-nominally) with Shakespeare should not lead us to suppose that his purposes here can be understood wholly without reference to other writings – chiefly, of course, *The Art of Being Ruled*, and also *Time and Western Man*.[2]

Even, however, as "another book about Shakespeare," the book says the best things that have been said about certain plays. Mr. Lewis points out that Shakespeare criticism, during the later nineteenth century and up to the present time, has been mostly carried on by admirable competent academic scholars – who, whether they agree or not, have carried on the same traditions and have pursued the game according to much the same rules; and who have been representative of a particular class and a particular background of culture.[3]* This foray by an outsider is therefore useful in breaking up certain ideas, whether we accept those of Mr. Lewis or not. This is an exposition of one side of Shakespeare: not, I think, the whole story. When anybody writes a book about Shakespeare, one can gather something of its limitations by observing what plays the author gives most attention to, and what plays he overlooks. Like Mr. Middleton Murry, Mr. Lewis gives scant attention to the later plays. But he deals with several very important plays which had not hitherto received their due: *Troilus and Cressida*, *Timon of Athens*, and *Coriolanus*. When one knows the work of Mr. Lewis, one understands his particular interest in these plays; but it is also interesting to observe that since *The Lion and the Fox* was written (1927) these three plays, and also *Measure for Measure*, have proved themselves to have a special attraction for the more intelligent part of the contemporary public. *The Lion and the Fox* may be called a commentary on *Timon*; though to leave it at that would be misleading. In any case, it

contains the most revelatory criticism of *Timon*, *Troilus*, and *Coriolanus*, that I have read.

Coriolanus, in fact, has a peculiar pertinence. For Mr. Lewis has seen (what the French public, a few years ago, seems to have missed)[4] that *Coriolanus* is not a defence of aristocracy, or a mere attack on the mob. Shakespeare is, in fact, completely critical and detached from any partisanship: in this play his own emotion is very strong indeed, but cannot be associated with that of any character or group in the play – and it is this detachment which makes the ordinary reader find this most violent play rather frigid. It is never a popular point of view. *The Lion and the Fox* is also a book about politics; but instead of calling it a "political book" we should do better to call it an "anti-political" book. And for this reason it is very pertinently concerned with Machiavelli.[5]

Now in "politics" there are found two kinds of mind – though the two may sometimes be found in apparent combination. There is the *ruler* – the man of action, whose purpose is to gain power and keep it; and there is the *ideologue*, whose usual purpose is to dispose men's minds for change. (The ideologue is, in another sense, also a kind of man of action). The ruler is never completely committed to any particular theory, but he must (in varying degrees, according to the importance of theory for the people he has to rule) always profess to be orthodox to the theory of the moment, even when he finds it expedient to act counter to it. It is perhaps worthwhile at this point to mention the difference between the *aristocratic* ruler (seldom quite so aristocratic as he is imagined to be) who is an extinct type, and the demagogue. Frederick the Great, to whom Mr. Lewis devotes a chapter of this book, was an aristocratic ruler: with the advantage of being an exceptionally intelligent tyrant over an exceptionally docile people.[6] Frederick the Great was therefore able to be a kind of artist, playing a part for his own amusement and in conformity with his own private and very unpleasant ideal. The modern "dictator," a Hitler or Mussolini, must be thought of rather (I am not professing to interpret Mr. Lewis's opinion, but venturing my own) as a highly paid *leading actor*, whose business is to divert his people (individually, from the spectacle of their own littleness as well as from more useful business). (I wonder whether the more retired life of other dictators, Josef the Terrible or the gentle Salazar, is not perhaps a token that they have more real power).[7] The ruler as dramatic star – with illustrations from the customs of African tribes – is one object of Mr. Lewis's attention.[8]

Of ideologues we find also two kinds: the majority ideologue and the minority ideologue. The former, if he is a big one like Marx, anticipates the way in which things are going; if he is a little one like Mr. Laski or Mr. Strachey, he accepts the current of ideas (not *quite* the same thing as the current of events) as he finds it.[9] The minority ideologue – a de Maistre, a Bonald, a Maurras, or a Charles Benoist – is against the current;[10] and the best that he can expect is to be hailed some generations later (by people with whom he would very likely have little sympathy) as a forerunner. But his purposes are the same, (whether his ideas be more or less desirable), as those of the others.

We do not need to believe that Machiavelli was an "ideologue" of either kind. He was in some respects, I believe, rather like Mr. Lewis who writes about him: a mild, detached man, who could never be the dupe of an idea, but who would be rather inefficient in private affairs, the prey of pickpockets, and the recipient of many a leaden half-crown. What gives his book its terrifying greatness is the fact that he *does not seem to care*.[11] He is not advocating anything, he is merely expounding and exposing. He has of course been adopted and made fashionable in Italy (having been a Florentine and having written in the language of Florence) and elsewhere – I suspect that his maxims may be agreeable to our ferocious friend Mr. A. L. Rowse.[12] But that is because the anti-liberalism which is the offspring of liberalism likes to see itself as consciously cynical and opposed to humbug. Mr. Lewis points out that the emotions actually felt by a Shakespearean hero in real life would be very different from those of his creator; and I think that the emotions of the professed Machiavellian have very little likeness to those of Machiavelli.

As for Mr. Lewis's politics, I see no reason to suppose that he is any more of a "fascist" or "nazi" than I am. People are annoyed by finding that you are not on their side; and if you are not, they prefer you to surrender yourself to the other: if you can see the merits, as well as the faults, of parties to which you do not belong, that is still worse. Anyone who is not enthusiastic about the fruits of liberalism must be unpopular with the anglo-saxon majority. So far as I can see, Mr. Lewis is defending the detached observer. The detached observer, by the way, is likely to be anything but a dispassionate observer; he probably *suffers* more acutely than the various apostles of immediate action. The detached observers are in theory the philosophers, the scientists, the artists, and the Christians. But most of the people who profess to represent one or another of these categories, are more or less

implicated in the politics of their time and place. Philosophy has long since been suspect; and the kind that makes the most voluble pretensions to impartiality may be the most dangerous. The future of the detached observer does not seem to me to be very bright. Perhaps it never was. But the tendencies of what is called "education" to-day seem peculiarly unfavourable to his survival.[13] Anyway it is in the aspect of the *detached observer* that I have wished to present Mr. Lewis in this note. There has never been a time, surely, when it was more important that the thinker and the artist should endeavour to *get outside* of their own country and own epoch, an epoch which means anything rather than running round all the rest, or settling oneself comfortably in some past age.

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. On 25 Oct 1937, TSE replied to a request from Julian Symons, editor of *Twentieth Century Verse*, that he would be "very glad to write something for your Lewis number on *The Lion and the Fox*." The double number included a letter to the editor from Lewis and contributions from TSE and sixteen other critics on aspects of Lewis's work. After TSE's review was reprinted in *Shenandoah*, 4 (Summer-Autumn 1953), J. Alan White of Methuen wrote to TSE in Nov 1954 requesting permission to use the first two paragraphs for the dust jacket of Methuen's new edition of the volume (1956): "I do not think that an ordinary blurb is required on the jacket. . . . These two paragraphs distinguish the book very clearly from other books about Shakespeare . . . and that, in my view, is what is needed." "Certainly if you wish you may use the first paragraphs of my notice of *The Lion and the Fox*," TSE replied on 25 Nov, "and if Lewis approves I have no objection whatever. Indeed, I have just reread the whole article, and with one or two minor changes, I wish that there were some further use for it all, as it impresses me more favourably than my prose usually does on inspection after so many years."

2. In *The Art of Being Ruled* (1926), Lewis develops his anti-democratic concept of authoritarian rule by the most intelligent men, expressing his admiration of responsible fascist government; in *Time and Western Man* (1927), he develops his anti-romantic concept of the "Time-Mind," with chapters on Pound, Joyce, Stein, Einstein, and James.

3*. TSE's note: "Neither the work of Granville-Barker nor that of Wilson Knight falls quite within *this* category, but that is another story."

4. The production of a new translation of *Coriolanus* by René-Louis Piachaud, mounted at the Comédie-Française in Paris on 9 Dec 1933, was seen as a pro-Fascist polemic against democratic institutions and the socialist government, provoking loud protests and rioting. On 4 Feb 1934, the production was closed for a month following rioting during the performance.

5. Though TSE did not review *The Lion and the Fox* upon publication in 1927, he described it in "Niccolò Machiavelli" (1927): "The dramatization of Machiavelli in England has been . . . recently discussed more philosophically by Mr. Wyndham Lewis in his extremely interesting study of Shakespeare, *The Lion and the Fox*" (3.116). Lewis devotes part II of the book to Machiavelli, before turning to Shakespeare in parts III to IX.

6. In part II, Lewis portrays Frederick the Great (1712-86), King of Prussia from 1740 to 1786, as "the furthest perfection that the [Machiavellian] type has yet attained" (102), and as "the ideal of a greater Machiavelli. He is the last *Machiavel* in history no doubt that will ever be seen, or at least of which history will be allowed to preserve a true portrait" (105).

7. TSE alludes to Josef Stalin (1879-1953), dictator of the Soviet Union since 1928, in the image of the first Tsar of all Russia, Ivan IV Vasilyesvich (1530-84), known as Ivan the Terrible, and to António de Oliveira Salazar (1889-1970), the authoritarian prime minister of Portugal since 1932. In propagandist press, and in some independent accounts, Salazar's personal demeanor was described as gentle, modest, and unassuming.

8. Lewis illustrates his argument that "the function of the king is curiously bound up with the idea of sacrifice" (135) with African parallels in the Thonga and Dahomey kings, drawing on Frazer's *The Golden Bough*, Robert H. Lowie's *Primitive Society*, A. B. Ellis's *The Ewe-Speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast of West Africa*, and Archibald Dalzel's *History of Dahomey*. Lewis follows a comparative method similar to TSE's in his essay on "The Interpretation of Primitive Ritual" (1913), whose aim was, like Frazer, "to make manifest the similarities and identities underlying the customs of races very remote in every way from each other" (1.113).

9. John Gould Fletcher reviewed Harold J. Laski's *Communism* (1927), an account of Marxist theory and its recent application in Russia, in the *Criterion* of Sept 1927 (261-67); TSE reviewed Laski's *An Introduction to Politics* in his "Commentary" of Oct 1931, describing him as being "more than well known as an exponent of moderate Socialism" (4.354). John Strachey (1901-63), editor of the *Socialist Review* and an adherent of Marxism-Leninism, was a founder of the Popular Front in Britain in Dec 1936. TSE had two of Strachey's books reviewed in the *Criterion*: *The Nature of Capitalist Crisis* (1935) was studied by A. L. Rowse in the issue of Oct 1935 (107-09), and *The Theory and Practice of Socialism* (1936) was reviewed by E. W. F. Tomlin in the issue of Apr 1937 (508-14).

10. All counterrevolutionary conservative thinkers and politicians: Joseph de Maistre, a dogmatic defender of the monarchy and the Catholic Church in re-establishing a "throne-and-altar" authoritarian tradition; Louis de Bonald, who advocated a hierarchy of authority in monarchy-church-aristocracy-subjects, an order of strict relationships that allowed no marital divorce; and Charles Benoist, author of the three-volume *Le Machiavélisme* (1907-36) and leader of French royalists, who as author of *The Laws of French Policy* (1928) aligned himself with Charles Maurras and the Action Française after the Vatican's condemnation in Dec 1926. TSE discusses de Maistre and Bonald in his "Commentary" of Jan 1934 (5.7), Benoist in "Niccolò Machiavelli" (3.115).

11. TSE discusses Machiavelli's *The Prince* (1532), his "impersonality and detachment," and the degree to which his mind has been historically misunderstood in "Niccolò Machiavelli" (3.111).

12. A. L. Rowse, an outspoken member of the Labour Party, a Socialist, and at this time a Marxist-minded critic of Britain's economic policies, had on TSE's invitation published a survey of Communist theory in "The Literature of Communism: Its Origin and Theory" in the *Criterion* of Apr 1929 (422-36). In response, TSE wrote in "Mr. Barnes and Mr. Rowse" that "Mr. Rowse seems to me to try to isolate the rational and ignore the irrational element in communism" (3.661). Rowse followed up with "The Theory and Practice of Communism" in the issue of Apr 1930 (451-69), concluding that "Marxism is something more than a body of

theory, and Communism than a political system. It is a Renaissance of its kind: it has the vitality of a new humanism. . . . There they may be on the verge of such a movement, a new form of society; or the experiment may fail, and the waste prospects of capitalist civilization close in upon us again" (468-69). His *Politics and the Younger Generation*, published by Faber in 1931, in which he advocated "a working-class basis of government," was followed by *The Question of the House of Lords* (1934) and *Mr. Keynes and the Labour Movement* (1936).

13. TSE discusses problems in contemporary education in "Modern Education and the Classics" (5.337).

A Note on Two Odes of Cowley[1]

The meaning of the term "metaphysical poetry" is stretched to its utmost to include Cowley; and in considering Cowley as a metaphysical poet, our interest in that subject is stretched to its utmost too. It is quite right that specimens by Cowley should be included in a volume of selections from the metaphysical poets; but if we were making a selection from Cowley we might be justified in omitting all of those poems which show direct indebtedness to Donne. Cowley's relation to Donne, in *The Mistress* (e.g. "My Diet"),[2] is that of an imitator; unlike Cleveland or Benlowes, he has no grain of originality, however perverse, to provide an interesting derivative. The poems included in Sir Herbert Grierson's anthology exhibit Cowley at his mild best and most readable;[3] and apart from these, he is perhaps best remembered by the few lines which provided Dryden with a magnificent parody in *Mac Flecknoe*.[4] But in Cowley's poetry there is another interest, which belongs rather to the history of thought and sensibility than to the pleasures of art.

Cowley is, I think, to be appreciated as an early Augustan as well as a late metaphysical. It has fallen to many small poets to be late followers of a distinguished school, and to be the authors of a few verses meriting a place in anthologies; and it has fallen to some to be interesting precursors. It cannot have fallen to many to occupy both positions, and in such a way as to provide the literary expression of a state of mind different from either. Cowley's moderate talent placed him in this unusual position; with a more original, or a more adaptable fancy, he might have been more completely assimilated to an earlier or a later generation. He is neither Caroline nor Restoration: his state of mind would appear rather to be that of the Exile. In our historical reading of poetry we are apt to skip from type to type; we are influenced, because of natural inertia, by the classifications of the history books. We can place ourselves in a position to accept Donne and his immediate followers; or we can pass to the late seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries. Cowley is at a disadvantage compared with either those who preceded or those who followed him. I do not make pretensions for him by the standards of his greater precursors. But I think that there is a good case to be made out for him in a form in which he was preceded by Ben Jonson,

and was followed by Dryden and by Collins and Gray, the so-called Pindaric ode.[5]

Whether the Pindaric ode is in itself a form of verse unsuited to the English language is an idle speculation, because everything is impossible until some one has done it. We can only say that this is a form which no one has yet practised successfully in English. To have made something of it would have strained the powers of a Milton. No one with less mastery could succeed with it, and only poets of less mastery have attempted it. But of those who did attempt it, I claim that it was Cowley who practised it most successfully. To have practised an alien and unassimilated form of verse better than any one else may seem a negligible distinction; yet to assert that Cowley's odes are more interesting than those of Dryden, and much better than those of Gray and Collins, gives that distinction greater interest.

My familiarity with the Greek language has never been adequate to the appreciation of Pindar's odes in the original; and in translation they are very dull reading. I am therefore not in a position to affirm that those who profess to enjoy these odes are in reality mistaking their enjoyment of their own proficiency in Greek verse for enjoyment of poetry. But of English imitations, one may say that only a poet to whom sublimity came naturally, such as Milton, is qualified for such a task; and that to aim at sublimity and fail is one of the worst sins that a poet can commit. The odes of Dryden surprise and excite, and sustain a kind of interest to the end by the brilliance of *tours de force*; but content is sacrificed to magniloquence, and the music is harsh and metallic. The most admired odes of Gray, "The Bard" and "The Progress of Poesy," have not even this virtue to recommend them; their laboured progress is very different from the powerful easy movement of Dryden. The wit of Dryden is replaced by romantic imprecision, and the language deteriorates, as for example in the use of the words "ruin" and "confusion" at the beginning of "The Bard."[6]

I do not pretend, however, that the odes of Cowley are *better* than those of Dryden, but only that in the ode we get Cowley at his best, and Dryden at his worst; and that it is more satisfactory to watch a small man making a good job than a great man wasting his talent. Cowley, in the best of his odes, such as the ode "To Mr. Hobbes," the ode "Of Wit," and the ode "Upon Dr. Harvey," had something to say, was setting down something about his own age that was worth recording.[7] There is no straining, as with Gray, after a false sublime; and a quality of wit, carried over from the earlier

period, gives these odes an intellectual value absent from later productions in the same form. Cowley wrote, in these odes, of matters of intellectual importance.

While Cowley as a poet is derivative from the metaphysicals, as a mind he has very little in common with them. His use of the language is still Caroline: his mind is of the Restoration. He had considerable intellectual curiosity; but, in comparison with Donne, this curiosity is reduced and dissipated. Cowley knew Hobbes; he probably met men of science in Paris; and the science which he studied with the most attention was botany. He loved gardening. He was enthusiastic: he liked to formulate schemes for founding institutions and promoting scientific research. He belonged to a new world; a world which the metaphysicals could have made little of, a world which has lasted to our time; a world in which men lived in the expectation of perpetual, happy, and marvellous surprises of discovery and invention, surprises which were to have brought about a newer and happier world. The world of Cowley, indeed, is partly the world of Mr. H. G. Wells. When, therefore, he says in the ode "To Mr. Hobbes":

> Long did the mighty Stagirite retain
> The universal intellectual reign. . . .
> But as in time each great imperial race
> Degenerates, and gives some new one place:
> So did this noble empire waste,
> Sunk by degrees from glories past,
> And in the schoolmen's hands it perisht quite at last. . . .[8]

he is speaking, and speaking well, for the spirit of his time.

When, therefore, we admit that Cowley is inferior to his predecessors of the school of Donne, we cannot be contented to explain his inferiority simply by saying that he happened to be less of a poet. Nor is it sufficient to gibe, as did Johnson, at the apparent tepidity of Cowley's love affairs.[9] The transference of attention from theology to science, or to sciences – the beginning of that slow disease which was to separate and then confuse thought and feeling[10] – was a character of Cowley's time from which he could not escape. It is because he is so representative a man of his time – as a poet, the victim of his time – that he is interesting. We can say, I think, that belief is not a simple act of the mind, of such a kind that to "believe" in the world of the schoolmen, and to "believe" in a mechanistic universe, are as acts of believing identical. We might even suggest that "believing" changes from age to

age, although no age will possess the terms in which to define the difference between its believing and that of any previous age.[11] In the age of Cowley the traditional form of belief was broken, and of this breach his ode "To Mr. Hobbes" is a monument. The romantic form of belief, belief in one's individual feelings, or in collective feeling, had not yet been evolved. There was, in Cowley's world, no object of belief capable of eliciting from him a response of the highest poetic intensity. There is therefore an *adequacy* in the ode to Hobbes, absent from *The Mistress*, which makes it satisfying.

Cowley's importance as a man who had some things to say about his own time, and who said them better than any one else, can be illustrated in a different way from his ode "Of Wit." This ode is of course not Pindaric, and in form is much closer to Donne. In this ode Cowley gives an account of wit as it was just before Dryden. To appreciate the definition of Cowley we need to compare it with the attempts made later by Dryden and by Johnson; from which it should appear that wit meant something a little different to each of these three men. In the "Life of Cowley" Johnson observes:

> If by a more noble and more adequate conception, that be considered as wit which is at once natural and new, that which, though not obvious, is, upon its first production, acknowledged to be just; if it be that which he that never found it, wonders how he missed; to wit of this kind the metaphysical poets have seldom risen. Their thoughts are often new, but seldom natural; they are not obvious, but neither are they just; and the reader, far from wondering that he missed them, wonders more frequently by what perverseness of industry they were ever found.[12]

It will be observed, I think, that for Johnson wit is still something serious, and not associated with "humour"; but that wit for him appears to be less a spirit animating the whole of a serious composition, than the occasional dignifying and embellishment of it. In the loosest of Donne's compositions there is a kind of continuity in chance, and we can perceive an effect of wit throughout the whole which is not merely the sum of the wit of the parts. In *The Vanity of Human Wishes* there is neatness and decorum, but these qualities do not constitute order.[13] In that poem there are plenty of intellectual variations on a main theme; but the effect is on the whole monotonous. We do not find the exceptional power of creating a unity of feeling out of the most disparate elements.

With Dryden we find a larger conception of wit than Johnson's. He says:

> The composition of all poems is, or ought to be, of wit; and wit in the poet, or *Wit writing* (if you will give me leave to use a school distinction) is no other than the faculty of imagination in the writer, which, like a nimble spaniel, beats over and ranges through the field of memory, till it springs the quarry it hunted after; or, without metaphor, which searches over all the memory for the species or idea of those things which it designs to represent. . . . [T]he first happiness of the poet's imagination is properly invention, or finding of the thought; the second is fancy, or the variation, deriving, or moulding, of that thought, as the judgment represents it proper to the subject; the third is elocution, or the art of clothing and adorning that thought, so found and varied, in apt, significant, and sounding words: the quickness of the imagination is seen in the invention, the fertility in the fancy, and the accuracy in the expression.[14]

It would appear that wit has for Dryden a greater extension than for Johnson; but even Dryden's meaning is a contraction from what the word meant for Cowley. Even Cowley defines wit in contrast to what we should call cheapness; but it is probable that he is protecting wit against those who would mistake cheapness for wit, rather than against any who might identify wit and cheapness.

Tell me, O tell, what kind of thing is Wit,
  Thou who master art of it.
For the first matter loves variety less;
Less women love 't, either in love or dress.
  A thousand different shapes it bears,
  Comely in thousand shapes appears.
Yonder we saw it plain; and here 'tis now,
Like spirits in a place, we know not how.

. . . . . .

'Tis not to force some lifeless verses meet
  With their five gouty feet.
All ev'ry where, like mans, must be the soul,
And reason the inferior parts control. . . .

Yet 'tis not to adorn, and gild each part;
That shows more cost, than art.
Jewels at nose and lips but ill appear;
Rather than all things wit, let none be there. . . .

'Tis not such lines as almost crack the stage
When Bajazet begins to rage. . . .

In a true piece of Wit all things must be,
Yet all things there agree.
As in the ark, join'd without force or strife,
All creatures dwelt; all creatures that had life.
Or as the primitive forms of all
(If we compare great things with small)
Which without discord or confusion lie,
In that strange mirror of the deity.[15]

This is not only good poetry, Cowley at his best, but it is better criticism of Donne than either Dryden or Johnson has made, while as a poem it was probably more congenial to either Dryden or Johnson than anything of Donne's.

M. Jean Loiseau, in his exhaustive work on Cowley, observes that the imagination of Cowley

> n'est pas inspirée par un enthousiasme visionnaire, mais elle est alimentée par ce que le XVII[e] siècle appelait l'esprit, "wit," c'est-à-dire la faculté d'analyse qui découvre les rapports cachés des choses.[16]

While I am ready to admit that Cowley himself never rises to a "visionary enthusiasm" (by which I take M. Loiseau to mean a kind of hallucinatory intensity), I question whether Cowley, who may also have thought his own odes, as he thought Pindar's, more tumultuous than they are, means by wit a mere analytical faculty – even if it be conceded that a faculty for discovering the hidden relations of things is merely "analytical." Cowley seems to me to mean something much more profound, something which can only be observed at its best in poets of the first rank, though not in all of them.

To find out what a critic of a long-past age meant by a term, we have not only to examine carefully the literal contexts of that term in his statements, but also, as far as we can, the unspoken context. We have to try to discover, not only what that critic's mental furniture was, not only what authors he

had read and admired, but the way in which he admired them. And we have to make the difficult and never wholly successful effort of erasing from our minds the ways in which they have been modified, in what they expect poetry to be, by everything that has been written *since* that critic wrote. And what we get, so far as we get it, will be something that we cannot adequately express in words. We cannot assume, in attempting to fix the earlier meaning of a word which has changed its meaning, that the words in which we define it will not have changed their meaning too. The *N.E.D.* mentions the word "wit" as having acquired the "reference to the utterance of brilliant or sparkling things in an amusing way."[17] Of course the term "amuse" has changed its meaning too; and what right have we to assume that that constellation of references to contexts, which is what we *mean* by "amuse," existed for a person of our level of education and sensibility in the middle of the seventeenth century? We must conclude that we cannot arrive at a full understanding of what either Cowley or Dryden or Johnson meant by wit. We can only be fairly confident that they did not mean quite the same thing, though there is of course a relation between their various meanings, and a relation of them all to our own; and that, to the extent of the general changes taking place – for we need not assume that every word changes its meaning at a uniform rate – they did not understand each other, just as we fail to understand them.

I am therefore driven back to a kind of personal confession instead of a definition of wit. It seems to me, however, the best that I can contribute, to a volume designed to honour a scholar who has done more than any other in our time towards removing the obstacles between ourselves and the poetry of the seventeenth century. My frequentation – unscholarly, I admit, and perhaps capricious and haphazard – of the poetry of that century has led me to feel that the word "wit" represents far more for me than anything that I could enclose within a definition. It has come to represent for me the essence of that strange period of poetry which ends with the Martyrdom and the Exile,[18] and is as much a part of that period's religious intensity as of its levity. The age of Donne, and of Herbert, Crashaw, and Vaughan seems to me the most "civilized" age of English poetry; in consequence the age of Gray, Collins, and Johnson even, and *a fortiori* the nineteenth century, decadent. "Wit" stands for a kind of balance and proportion of intellectual and emotional values, in which the poetry of the nineteenth century is lamentably deficient. Yet what I mean by wit is related to other meanings of the word, and even to that which connotes mirth – though there especially,

perhaps, to what is most alien to our age, a holy mirth. But I am quite aware that when I employ the terms "civilized" and "decadent" I am employing them in a private and arbitrary sense – until some one else employs them in the same way.

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. As printed in *Seventeenth Century Studies Presented to Sir Herbert Grierson*, ed. John Purves (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1938), [235]-42. On receiving the invitation from John Purves of Edinburgh University to contribute to the festschrift, TSE replied on 28 May 1936 that he was "unable to undertake to write a fresh essay" at the time: "The only suggestion I have to make is this, that I have an old lecture on Cowley, delivered ten years ago, which has never been published, and which I might be able to furbish up suitable to the occasion. If you think that this would be appropriate I will look over the essay carefully with that revision in view." The text that formed the basis for revision and expansion was TSE's seventh Clark lecture, "Cowley and the Transition," delivered at Trinity College, Cambridge, in Mar 1926 (2.725). TSE carried forward various passages and quotations from that lecture.

2. Cowley's "My Diet" ("Now by my Love, the greatest Oath that is, / None loves you half so well as I") in his volume *The Mistress* (1647) takes as its model Donne's "Love's Diet" (1633) ("To what a cumbersome unwieldiness / And burdenous corpulence my love had grown").

3. Grierson's *Metaphysical Lyrics and Poems of the Seventeenth Century: Donne to Butler* (1921) includes seven poems by Cowley: two under Grierson's heading "Love Poems" ("The Spring," "The Change"), and five under the heading "Miscellanies" ("Ode: Of Wit," "Against Hope," "On the Death of *Mr. Crashaw*," "Destinie," and "Hymn. To Light"). In his review of the anthology, "The Metaphysical Poets" (1921), TSE compares Donne and Cowley: "Donne, and often Cowley, employ a device which is sometimes considered characteristically 'metaphysical': the elaboration . . . of a figure of speech to the furthest stage to which ingenuity can carry it. Thus Cowley develops the commonplace comparison of the world to a chess-board through long stanzas ('To Destiny'), and Donne, with more grace, in 'A Valediction,' the comparison of two lovers to a pair of compasses" (2.375-76).

4. In *Mac Flecknoe* (1682), Dryden describes the "brothel houses" of the Barbican in London: "Scenes of lewd lovers, and of polluted joys / Where their vast courts the mother-strumpets keep, / And, undisturbed by watch, in silence sleep" (ll. 71-73). The last two lines are a parody of two lines from Cowley's unfinished biblical epic *Davideis* (1656): "Where their vast Courts the Mother-Waters keep, / And undisturb'd by Moon in Silence sleep."

5. Ben Jonson's Pindaric ode, "To the Immortal Memory and Friendship of that Noble Pair, Sir Lucius Cary and Sir H. Morison," was published in 1629; Dryden's odes include "A Song for St. Cecilia's Day" (1687) and "Alexander's Feast" (1697), both discussed by TSE earlier (4.123 and 271); the odes of William Collins were collected in *Odes on Several Descriptive and Allegorical Subjects* (1746); Thomas Gray's "The Bard: A Pindaric Ode" and "The Progress of Poesy: A Pindaric Ode" were published together under the title *Odes by Mr. Gray* (1757).

The form of ode associated with the Greek lyric poet Pindar (ca. 522-433 BC) was originally written to be accompanied by choric song and dance. The Pindaric ode contains three main subdivisions: "A strophe, a complex metrical structure whose length and pattern of heterometrical lines vary from one ode to another, reflects a dance pattern, which is then repeated exactly in an antistrophe (the dancers repeating the steps but in the opposite direction), the pattern being closed by an epode, or third section, of differing length and structure. The ode as a whole . . . is built up by exact metrical repetition of the original triadic pattern" (*The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*, 4th ed., Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012, 971).

6. "Ruin seize thee, ruthless King! / Confusion on thy banners wait"; the opening lines of "The Bard."

7. These were among the fifteen odes published in Cowley's *Pindarique Odes* (1656). In the preface, Cowley seeks to justify his belief that "our Ears are Strangers to the Musick of [Pindar's] Numbers" and that the distance from ancient Greek culture and language necessitates a looser form of the strict Pindaric ode, with irregular length, metric, and rhyme: "This Essay is but to try how it will look in an English Habit."

8. From the second stanza, partly modernized by TSE, of Cowley's Pindaric ode, "To Mr. Hobs," from *Poems* (1656); TSE's source text is A. R. Waller's edition of the *Poems* (Cambridge: CUP, 1905), 188.

9. Johnson wrote in his "Life of Cowley": "Of Cowley, we are told by Barnes, who had means enough of information, that, whatever he may talk of his own inflammability, and the variety of characters by which his heart was divided, he in reality was in love but once, and then never had resolution to tell his passions." From TSE's copy of Johnson's *Lives of the Most Eminent English Poets*, Chandos Classics, new edition (London: Frederick Warne, 1872), 3.

10. An echo of the separation of thought and feeling as defined in TSE's theory of "dissociation of sensibility" in "The Metaphysical Poets" (1921): "It is something which happened to the mind of England between the time of Donne . . . and the time of Tennyson and Browning . . . Tennyson and Browning are poets, and they think; but they do not feel their thought as immediately as the odour of a rose. A thought to Donne was an experience; it modified his sensibility. . . . In the seventeenth century a dissociation of sensibility set in, from which we have never recovered" (2.380).

11. In his Clark lecture, TSE stated that in the mind of Cowley certain ideas "are not believed by himself with the same intensity with which the ideas of Donne were entertained by himself. . . . I suggest to psychologists that Belief alters from age to age, so that when a person asserts 'I believe X,' we must take into account the position in time of the author of the statement. The eighteenth century appears much more settled, orderly and positive and confident in some aspects than the seventeenth; but its belief is of a different, I think of an inferior quality to that of the thirteenth century. And mind you, I am not speaking of the object of belief, but of the believing itself" (2.725). TSE discusses the changing nature of belief further in "A Note on Poetry and Belief" (3.19).

12. *Lives*, 9

13. Johnson's *The Vanity of Human Wishes* was published in 1749. TSE discusses the poem in his introduction to *London: A Poem and The Vanity of Human Wishes* (1930): "I sometimes think that our own time, with its elaborate equipment of science and psychological analysis, is even less fitted than the Victorian age to appreciate poetry as poetry. But if lines 189-220 of *The Vanity of Human Wishes* are not poetry, I do not know what is" (4.173).

14. From Dryden's "An Account of the Ensuing Poem," prefixed to his historical poem *Annus Mirabilis, the Year of Wonders, 1666* (1667), as printed in TSE's copy of the Everyman edition of Dryden's *Dramatic Essays* (London: J. M. Dent, 1912), which he purchased in Apr 1920. In this edition, the editor Ernest Rhys freely substitutes the title "The Proper Wit of Poetry" for the title of Dryden's essay (189-96; here 192).

15. "Ode: Of Wit," excerpts from stanzas 1 and 4 (lines 1-4; line 4, *read*: "And reason the inferior powers control"), stanza 5 (lines 1-4), stanza 7 (lines 1-2), and stanza 8 of 9 stanzas; partly modernized by TSE from Waller's edition of the *Poems*, 16-18.

16. *Abraham Cowley, sa vie, son œuvre* (Paris: Didier, 1931), 363; *trans*: [Cowley's imagination] is not inspired by a visionary enthusiasm, but it is fed by what the seventeenth century called the intellect, or "wit," that is to say, the analytical faculty that discovers the hidden relations of things.

TSE had earlier corresponded with Jean Loiseau of Trinity College, Cambridge, about arranging a lecture by Henri Massis at Cambridge (*L3* 87).

17. *A New English Dictionary on Historical Principles* (NED), the title of the original edition (1884-1928) of *The Oxford English Dictionary* (OED), which was the revised and corrected edition published in 1933; (OED, 7th definition).

18. The period from the martyrdom of Charles I at the hands of Oliver Cromwell in 1649, followed by the nine-year European exile of Charles II from 1651 to the Restoration in 1660.

A Commentary

The Criterion: A Literary Review, 17 (Jan 1938) 254-59

The presentation of a large sum of money to a University, to whatever purposes the gift is limited, is always the cause of jubilation by University authorities and of respectful admiration by the press. A few persons may wonder, from time to time, whether either the donors or the recipients are fully aware of what they are doing, or of the possible consequences in the long run. The recent benefactions of Lord Nuffield to Oxford afford a number of reasons for speculation of this quiet kind:[1] our chief difficulty is that the possible consequences extend in more than one direction, and perhaps no one person is qualified to estimate them all. Some may have wondered whether the cause of medical research can best be served at Oxford, rather than in London, where there are more hospitals, or in Cambridge or Edinburgh, universities in the past more celebrated for medical teaching. If Lord Nuffield's enthusiasm was for medical research, these persons might say, he might perhaps have served it better elsewhere; and if his enthusiasm was for Oxford, other persons may think, he might have served that university better in some other way. Oxford is already as big as it needs to be, or even bigger; and no one who is acquainted with the modern American universities should wish it to expand further.[2] Is a further influx of medical research students, who might have just as well been directed elsewhere, really desirable? And when Oxford is the national and imperial centre for medical research, and able to buy the best brains for this purpose at top prices, will not the Humanities decline there still further?

The Vice-Chancellor is at pains to assure us that the latter fear is groundless. "As illusory," he said, in Convocation on October 6,

> was the fear that the University was being given a twist towards scientific and away from those humanistic studies for which it was justly famous. In the appeal as much had been asked for humanistic studies, including the Bodleian, as for science. The object of the appeal is to enable us in science, as in other subjects, to maintain the old traditions of the University in the new conditions in which we are living.[3]

On turning, however, to the Oxford University Appeal, we are not altogether reassured. Certainly no one can object to the proper equipment of the Bodleian and the Ashmolean, or to a fund for archaeological research.[4] The other two needs in the Humane Studies are more obscure. We should like to know exactly what research "in the Arts subjects" is. And can we be sure that "the study of Human Society, Social Studies, and allied subjects, such as Anthropology" is necessarily "Humane" study?[5] In the past some of these studies have partaken more of the nature of pseudo-science. They are sometimes called "the Social Sciences." The instance given of a humane study for which there is an urgent need is curious:

> In a recent speech the Chancellor of the Exchequer drew attention to the "fresh set of problems," associated with the prospective decrease of population in these islands, "which are likely to make growing demands upon the attention of social investigators and statesmen." To ascertain and to measure the probable consequences – social, economic, and financial – of a fall in the population is the first step to the practical measures that will be needed to anticipate and to meet them.[6]

This is a remarkable statement of the problem. One would have thought that the first step would be to decide whether a fall in the population, from every point of view, was a good thing or a bad thing, and to ask how it comes about, rather than assume that it was something as far beyond human control as the procession of the seasons. While our endowed researchers are busy measuring the "probable consequences" and preparing reports which there will be nobody to read, the consequences will be upon us. But in any case, research into the probable consequences, social, economic and financial, of a decrease of the population is not exactly what one has in the past regarded as part of "the Humanities." The situation is made still more obscure to me by a sentence by the Vice-Chancellor quoted earlier in the Appeal. Higher study and research in a university, he says, "rest ultimately upon a spiritual foundation: the conviction in the minds of researchers, of teachers and students, that knowledge has its own standards of integrity and dispassionate inquiry."[7] That knowledge has its own standards of integrity – different, presumably, from those of something else, perhaps *action* – is a statement which may be taken for what it is worth, though it does not seem to me to mean much. But if I said that higher study in a university rested ultimately upon a spiritual foundation, I should want it to mean a good deal more than just that peculiar standard of integrity; and I should like to

put in a plea for *all* study, even if "lower" and only for a B.A. degree, even indeed in elementary schools, resting upon a "spiritual foundation." Of the decay of civilization there are sometimes symptoms in the use of the words.

Perhaps I should make it clear that when I say "spiritual foundation," I do not mean necessarily a monastic, or even a Christian foundation. The matter at issue is of education, and not of Christian education alone, but of what education always has meant for the most civilized men of all civilizations in the past. Higher education is not research, or technical accomplishment however difficult: it is the acquisition of wisdom. This is what it meant in Greece and in China in the past; and to some extent also at Oxford in the past.

There is one consequence of the acceptance by Oxford or Cambridge of such benefactions as Lord Nuffield's, which is only a possibility, but as such is worth considering in advance. The increase of University machinery and activity, as distinct from that of the Colleges, may lead to the necessity of greater centralization of authority, and greater continuity of direction. The universities will thus tend to assimilate themselves to the provincial universities, and ultimately to the megalopolitan American universities. The Appeal tells us that "The vitality and independence of the Universities is a standing guarantee against the contamination or perversion of knowledge at its source."[8] But a highly organized and centralized institution in a world in which political power, under whatever name, tends to become more autocratic and more comprehensive, is ultimately in a weaker position than is a congeries of almost independent colleges. In self-governing colleges, each (ideally at least) with a personality of its own, are more likely to be concealed a few men not too busy with research to have time to acquire a little wisdom, and to impart it to such undergraduates as come into contact with them.

The problem of the ultimate effect of highly centralized authority has immediacy in connexion with the new college ("Nuffield College" as *The Times* calls it)[9] to be built on a rather charming piece of old Oxford known as Canal Wharf.[10] As described by *The Times* in a leading article, this college might almost come straight out of *Gulliver's Travels*:

> This college will exist to be the meeting-place of men of learning with men of affairs in all departments where their interests may touch, but

> especially in those spheres of thought and action which make up the domain of the "social sciences." Under its roof the diverse specialists engaged in the study of human society – philosophers and economists, historians and anthropologists, jurists and

(*The Times* adds with perhaps unconscious humour)

> *perhaps even pastoral theologians* (italics mine) – are to sit down with representatives of the men actively engaged in the promotion of social welfare – politicians, civil servants, local government officials, and business men.[11]

It sounds an ideal nest for Sir Josiah Stamp.[12] There will be lady members too; and they will all meet (no doubt suitably chaperoned) for intellectual weekends.[13]

The Times, which has nothing but praise for this college, which is the product of "the newest and most advanced thought," finds some analogy in a college already existing at Oxford.[14] But in two very important respects it is more similar to a House founded at Harvard a few years ago by President Lowell: it will be a construction, not a growth, and it will be directed from above.[15]

> The intention of the founder is to make his College an instrument in the hand of the University, and he has accordingly reserved the ultimate authority over it to the Hebdomadal Council. This authority includes in particular the absolute control of the membership of the College, and of its endowments.[16]

The finger points towards centralization, towards the further Americanization of Oxford, and perhaps further still: to the ultimate incorporation of Oxford, with Cambridge and the Scottish universities, into one vast system manipulated from Whitehall. As for Lord Nuffield, it is far from my purpose to cast reproach upon him. He is simply a benevolent and innocent product of a system. There seems no reason to doubt that he is giving Oxford what Oxford desires, what other universities envy, and what the country applauds. His benefactions appear to have the approval of all those in this country who are supposed to have thought most deeply about education and to have dedicated their lives most fully to the cause of education. Why should he have any doubts?

The question of the dangers of large bequests for specified purposes has recently been raised in another form. The sums are not so great, the

possible harm not so serious; yet the matter is great and serious enough at that. It is the matter of the National Theatre. In doubts of the desirability of such an institution, I find myself at one with the dramatic critic of *The Times*, after reading all the correspondence which his article provoked.[17] Here again, we have to do with something that is not a growth, but a creation by the power of money; in this case, by the will of a public-spirited citizen, Sir Carl Meyer, who has been dead for some years.[18] The correspondence is too varied to be sifted and classified within my limits (Mr. Clifford Bax, for instance, writing from Albany, W. 1., complains that the Old Vic stands "in a most unpleasant part of London");[19] but among those who spoke with most authority, Lord Lytton appeared vague, and Mr. Bernard Shaw merely ill-mannered.[20] Mr. Shaw's apology for a National Theatre is indeed somewhat weakened by Mr. Hamilton Fyfe's revelation that, when he proposed (I presume, some years ago) that the money should be applied to subsidizing the Old Vic, Mr. Shaw seconded the motion.[21] I believe that this would have been the best disposition of the money, assuming it to have been legally allowable;[22] and to my mind the Waterloo Road is quite as accessible, and a good deal more genial, than the Cromwell Road. But in the end the defenders of the National Theatre have the advantage, because the money is there, and how it shall be applied is clearly indicated in the terms of the bequest. Even so, I wonder (again with the monitory example of American universities in mind) whether it would not be wiser to try to secure an existing theatre for a few years, and let us see a National Theatre in action. What plays will they produce? What will they pay their actors and producers, and what actors and producers can they attract? These are important questions that have not been asked. And there is always the danger of putting up a building (with busts of selected dramatists round the frieze or the foyer) and deluding ourselves into believing that we have created an institution. It has been tried before. And in the background loom the shadows of the Royal Academy and the Royal Society of Literature.

And in this matter too, the question of central authority appears. Is the Theatre, or is it not, eventually to be assisted by the Nation's money? (In that event, we can imagine angry taxpayers protesting to their Members of Parliament against Wycherley or O'Casey – and if the Theatre is to be *truly* National, can dramatists with names like O'Casey be admitted?)[23] May it come under the department of some eventual Minister for Fine Arts? One of the correspondents of *The Times* has quoted a sentence from Matthew

Arnold, which rings much more ominously now than Arnold could have anticipated:

> Organize the theatre: the theatre is irresistible.[24]

T. S. E.

NOTES

1. William Richard Morris (1877-1963), the Lord Nuffield, later 1st Viscount Nuffield, was an English car manufacturer and founder of Morris Motors Limited, from which he derived his wealth. Married but childless, he gave away most of his fortune to universities and social causes.

"Nuffield College," the notice of Lord Nuffield's gift and the second Oxford appeal, appeared in the *Times* of 11 Dec 1937 (14); the notice of the original Oxford appeal, signed by Lord Halifax, chancellor of the university, and A. D. Lindsay, vice-chancellor, had appeared under the heading "Future of Oxford / Appeal by the Chancellor / Needs of a Modern University" in the *Times* of 9 Feb 1937 (15-16). Nuffield's benefaction of £1,000,000 was granted to enable the university "to build a college for post-graduate studies especially, but not exclusively, in the field of social study, and to build in the science area and equip a laboratory of physical chemistry." This gift, announced in Dec 1937, was one of many gifts Nuffield had given; at the start of the appeal, he had given £2,000,000 for the new Schools of Medical Research.

TSE's sources for this "Commentary" include a number of articles from the *Times* as well as the original Oxford appeal, which probably appeared as a circular or letter, and from which the *Times* quotes extensively, as well as further communications from university officials, printed and spoken, which the *Times* quotes. Where it is obvious TSE is quoting from the *Times*, that source is preferred here. Where TSE quotes from the appeal, in phrases that do not appear in the *Times*, the appeal itself, "Needs of the University," is cited, as it was reprinted in *The American Oxonian*, vol 24 (Jan 1937), 3-9.

2. In "Modern Education and the Classics," TSE criticizes the expansion of American universities (5.338).

3. TSE here blends together the reported speech and direct speech of the vice-chancellor, as relayed in the *Times* on 7 Oct 1937, under the heading "Oxford Finance / Lord Nuffield's Benefaction / Vice-Chancellor on New Building": the vice-chancellor "pointed out how illusory was the apprehension that the Nuffield benefaction was likely to convert the University into one predominantly medical; the scheme was a research, not a teaching, scheme. As illusory was the fear that the University was being given a twist towards scientific and away from those humanistic studies for which it was justly famous. In the appeal as much had been asked for humanistic studies, including the Bodleian, as for science. 'The object of the appeal,' he said, 'is to enable us in science, as in other subjects, to maintain the old traditions of the University in the new conditions in which we are living'" (11).

4. "The Library of Thomas Bodley is Oxford's greatest trust . . . Yet, so endowed, this great instrument of knowledge has been gradually choked by the superabundance of its own possessions, until the Library is no longer capable of giving the service rightly demanded of it. To this end the old Bodleian must be set free for study purposes, and a modern book-stack built where the precious and ever-increasing collection of literary work may be most economically

housed, protected, and arranged for ready reference. // So, too, it is with the Museum, which, like Bodley's Library, has long outgrown the accommodation which the versatile Elias Ashmole gave to Oxford nearly 300 years ago. The School of Archaeology, which has done much of recent years to increase the reputation of Oxford, must find new space not only to house and exhibit the legacies of the past, but also to enable students of to-day and to-morrow to make these their own, and in their turn to add to them" ("Future of Oxford," 15).

5. "Oxford's most pressing needs in research are summarized roughly under two headings. In respect of the Humane studies the requirements include the extension of the Bodleian Library and a fund for maintenance; extension of the Ashmolean Museum and a fund for archaeological research; provision for the study of human society, social studies, and allied subjects, such as anthropology; a general fund for the better organization and extension of research in the Arts subjects, including the provision of research posts" ("Future of Oxford," 16).

6. Source untraced

7. "Needs of the University," 3-4

8. "Needs of the University," 4

9. After the announcement of the donation was made, but before Nuffield and the university had signed a Deed of Covenant and Trust, it was unclear in press reports what the name of the college would be (Nuffield College did become its official name). In an article of 13 Oct 1937, under the heading "Learning and Life," the *Times* writes: "The constitution of Nuffield College – to give it provisionally the obvious name – is defined in broad outline by the founder" (15).

10. "[T]he University is now presented with a round million pounds, of which one-tenth is in land, being the hitherto neglected site known as the Canal Wharf, lying a little to the south of Worcester College, along one of the two roads leading from the city to the railway station. Here Lord Nuffield asks the University to build and endow a new College, and places £900,000 in trust for the purpose" ("Learning and Life," 15).

11. "Learning and Life," 15.

12. In "The Church as an Ecumenical Society," TSE is critical of Josiah Stamp, the industrialist, economist, and banker who often wrote on the theme of Christian ethics and the economy (5.502 n.5).

13. "It is clearly implied that [the members] will be men – or women, for this is the first college to be open to both sexes – who are actively engaged in the practice of their callings, and whose contribution to the studies of the College will be made through the intimate social intercourse of its Hall and Common Room on the occasions – no doubt generally at week-ends – when they have leisure to visit Oxford" ("Learning and Life," 15).

14. All Souls is the analogous college: "it is possible that the members of that unique foundation [All Souls], which so many Oxford Radicals have desired to abolish as an anachronism, may permit themselves to smile on observing how much of their peculiar system the newest and most advanced thought proposes to borrow" ("Learning and Life," 15).

15. Abbott Lawrence Lowell was president of Harvard University from 1909 to 1933. He was responsible for Harvard's residential house system, which dramatically changed the social atmosphere of the campus, especially in its disruption of the "Gold Coast" – the off-campus conclave where wealthy students (including TSE) had lived since the late 1870s. By 1931, the first seven undergraduate houses were built and occupied: Adams, Dunster, Eliot, Kirkland, Leverett, Lowell, and Winthrop.

16. "Learning and Life," 15

17. On 26 Aug 1937, under the heading "The National Theatre / The Case for the Opposition / Unneeded and Costly," the drama critic for the *Times* (Charles Langbridge Morgan) argued against building and funding a National Theatre: "To show that a National Theatre is not necessary as a museum, not promising as a basis of experiment, and not desirable as an academy may be thought not enough by those who are wedded to this vague and grandiose scheme" (13). While the controversy dated back to 1909, when Carl Meyer donated a substantial sum to build a theater, Morgan's attack was prompted by the announcement, on 4 Aug 1937, that the Trustees of the Shakespeare Memorial National Theatre Committee had finally purchased a site at Cromwell Gardens with the intention of building and soliciting further funds ("Site of National Theatre," *Times*, 12). Appearing on the same day was an unsigned editorial ("A National Theatre," 13) that approved the plan and urged the cessation of debate. The editorial had little effect: Morgan's attack generated correspondence well into Oct.

18. In 1909, Carl Ferdinand Meyer, later 1st Baronet (1851-1922), donated £70,000 to the Shakespeare National Memorial Theatre. How, where, and whether such a theater was to be built was still a matter of controversy decades later.

19. Clifford Bax's letter to the *Times* of 20 Sept 1937 begins: "Sir, – With great respect for all that Miss Baylis has achieved and with apologies in advance to everybody, I beg to suggest that the Old Vic stands in a most unpleasant part of London and that, whatever our dramatic critics may say, it is just faintly possible that the National Theatre will improve upon the standards of the Old Vic" (8).

20. Victor Alexander George Robert Bulwer-Lytton, second earl of Lytton (1876–1947), "The National Theatre / Guarding against a 'Mausoleum' / History of the Appeal," *Times*, 28 Aug 1937, 11; G. B. Shaw, "Subsidizing the Theatre / The Mitigation of 'Barbarism' / Mr. Shaw's View," *Times*, 13 Sept 1937, 13.

21. In his letter to the *Times* of 3 Sept 1937, the journalist and editor Henry Hamilton Fyfe (1869-1951) recalled: "I proposed, as a member of the executive, that our money should be used as Mr. Guinness suggests [to subsidize the Old Vic]. Mr. Bernard Shaw seconded my resolution. It was defeated – heavily" (13).

22. The terms of the trust required that a new theater be built.

23. TSE discusses Wycherley's anti-Puritan, sexually explicit play, *The Country Wife*, in his Apr 1924 "Commentary" (2.521) and ranks that play above Congreve's *The Old Bachelour*. Seán O'Casey (1880-1964) was an Irish playwright whose most successful and important works include the three collectively known as the Dublin Trilogy – *The Shadow of a Gunman* (1923), *Juno and the Paycock* (1924), and *The Plough and the Stars* (1926) – as well as *The Silver Tassie* (1928).

24. Writing to the *Times* in favor of the National Theatre, John Pollock ends his letter of 5 Oct 1937: "'Organize the theatre,' wrote Matthew Arnold. 'The theatre is irresistible.' A chance has now come to test this dictum; the call should then be not for faint hearts and recrimination, but for an enlightened push to put the matter to the proof" (10). Arnold's original quotation has been reversed by Pollack, and subsequently by TSE. Arnold ends his essay by imagining Sarah Bernhardt offering a valedictory charge to Londoners: "*The theatre is irresistible: organize the theatre!*" ("The French Play in London," *Nineteenth Century*, Aug 1879, 228-43).

Report of an address at Southwark Cathedral

The Times (3 Feb 1938) 8

Under the heading "Where Chaucer Worshipped / Needs of Southwark Cathedral / An Appeal for £25,000," the *Times* reported on an event at Mansion House on 2 Feb, at which TSE was one of the principal speakers, with the Lord Mayor and the Lady Mayoress presiding. Speaking in support of the preservation appeal, the Archbishop of Canterbury described the continuous history of "this great treasure-house of beauty" over the past 800 years, including its associations with Chaucer, Gower, Shakespeare and the Globe Theatre, the printing of the first complete English Bible, and "that accomplished scholar Lancelot Andrewes, who represented the Church of England at its best when it had emerged from the throes of the Reformation."

Other speakers included Lord Fermoy, president of the Harvard Club of London, who expressed "the great debt that graduates of Harvard University owed to John Harvard, their founder, who was baptized in the Cathedral in 1607." The Bishop of Southwark "pleaded that the Cathedral at the very gateway of the City . . . was the mother church of a populous, hard-pressed, and very poor diocese . . . and now they found that the Cathedral was in imminent need of repair."

Though no direct quotations from the speech can be securely identified from this report, the journalist's outline of TSE's ideas are of historical value in context of his continuous support and defense of English churches and his ongoing vision of enhancing communal life within them.

Mr. T. S. Eliot, representing the literary associations of the Cathedral, said that Southwark Cathedral had something that even the Wren churches in the City could not give. It had a more venerable antiquity, a greater authority, and more numerous august associations. It was not mere piety that drove City workers into City churches and, sometimes, into Southwark Cathedral, at luncheon hours, but the physical peace gained in that way did something to pave the way to another peace, and it was to those people who had learned to know the City churches that those buildings meant most.[1] He refused to think that Southwark Cathedral was a monument only; it was still a living church and, as such, should not have to beg its annual pittance to keep body and roof together.

NOTE

1. As an employee of Lloyds Bank in Lombard Street from 1917 to 1925, TSE frequently spent part of his lunch hour in the City churches of All Hallows, St. Mary Woolnoth, and St. Magnus Martyr, occasionally crossing London Bridge to Southwark Cathedral. His continuous support of English cathedrals began with his opposition to the proposed demolition of nineteen City churches in his "London Letter" of May 1921: "To one who, like the present writer, passes his days in this City of London, . . . the loss of these towers . . . and of these empty naves, to receive the solitary visitor at noon from the dust and tumult of Lombard Street, will be irreparable and unforgotten" (2.345). When the demolition proposal was renewed in 1926, TSE wrote in his *Criterion* "Commentary": "A visible church, whether it assembles five hundred worshippers or only one passing penitent who has saved a few minutes from his lunch hour, is still a church" (2.832). He returned once again to his concern for (and the personal value of) English churches and cathedrals in "Lancelot Andrewes," declaring that "there are those for whom the City churches are as precious as any of the four hundred odd churches in Rome which are in no danger of demolition" (2.817).

At the time of his address in support of Southwark Cathedral, TSE had begun to develop his vision of transforming cathedrals for the modern religious community by bringing contemporary art, music, and drama into them and making them the center of religious and artistic activity in their dioceses. This vision was initially sketched in a 1931 address at Chichester Cathedral, "If I Were a Dean" (4.296), which led to the production of *Murder in the Cathedral* in the Chapter House of Canterbury Cathedral in 1935 and, subsequently, in a 1951 lecture to the Friends of Chichester Cathedral, published as *The Value and Use of Cathedrals in England Today* (1952).

To the Editor of *Blackfriars*

Blackfriars, 19 (Mar 1938) 217

AMENDES HONORABLES.[1] Mr. T. S. Eliot has kindly written to us drawing attention to a grave misunderstanding which may arise from our all too brief reference to his important observations in the current *Criterion*:[2]

In your admirable "Extracts and Comments," which I invariably read with profit, I am a little nettled to find, in the current number, a brief reference to my having commented "charitably" on Lord Nuffield's benefactions to Oxford. While I hope that my comments always show Christian charity . . . I take a mild exception – not to the brevity of the reference – but to the use of the word "charitably" in such a brief reference. Are you sure that all your readers will take it simply that I have shown Christian charity towards this appalling blunder? – and that they will not interpret your remark as meaning what in journalistic language is called "qualified approval"? I wished to express unqualified disapproval. . . .[3]

NOTES

1. *Trans*: honourable reparations

2. Commenting on the contents of the Jan issues of contemporary journals in its issue of Feb 1938, *Blackfriars* stated of the *Criterion*: "T. S. Eliot comments charitably on Lord Nuffield's 'benefactions' to Oxford University" (142). In his Jan "Commentary," TSE had questioned the potential consequences of Lord Nuffield's gift of £1,000,000 for clinical research and the announcement of a further appeal for funds by Oxford, expressing his concern for the effect on the "Humanities" of such specified gifts and appeals and for the danger of the "ultimate incorporation of Oxford, with Cambridge and the Scottish universities, into one vast system manipulated from Whitehall" (5.572).

3. In correspondence with the editor, Rev. Victor White (1902-60), TSE stated that he was "sure you have as enlightened a circle of readers as any periodical in the country. In this circumstance, I think it would be making perhaps too much fuss to print my letter as a letter, but I am quite willing that you should quote from it if you think best." In the first ellipses, White excised TSE's parenthetical comment – "(I fear that sometimes they do not)" – and in the second ellipses deleted the remainder of the letter except for a sentence included in his editorial comment printed after the excerpt. TSE's letter continues:

> The point might not matter if any considerable part of the press had taken a similar view to mine. But so far as I know, mine was a solitary voice warning against the subject of the

Oxford of "Dominus illuminatio mea" to the purposes of materialism. And, so far as I know, mine was the only voice raised in criticism of the preposterous Appeal for Funds signed by Lord Halifax and the Master of Balliol.

I need hardly say, that this letter is not intended for publication.

I am, Reverend Sir,
Your obedient servant,
T. S. Eliot

The opening words of Psalm 27, "Dominus illuminatio mea" ("The Lord *is* my light") serve as the motto of the University of Oxford. Notice of Lord Nuffield's gift and the second Oxford appeal appeared in the *Times* of 11 Dec 1937 (14); the original Oxford appeal, signed by Lord Halifax, chancellor of the university, and A. D. Lindsay, master of Balliol and vice-chancellor of the university, appeared under the heading "Future of Oxford /Appeal by the Chancellor / Needs of a Modern University" in the *Times* of 9 Feb 1937 (15-16).

At the end of TSE's edited letter, Rev. White printed his response: "We would deeply regret any such deplorable misunderstanding; and can plead only that the justice and urgency of Mr. Eliot's comment seemed to us so self-evident that we were the more impressed with his charity and moderation. We can find less excuse for having referred with such casual brevity to Mr. Eliot's important and almost solitary protest against a situation fraught with a threat of sheer disaster to the University of Oxford. For, as Mr. Eliot goes on to complain, "So far as I know, mine was a solitary voice of warning against the subjection of the Oxford 'Dominus Illuminatio Mea' to the purposes of materialism." Still more deplorable is the fact that, so far as we are aware, no effort has yet been made by the responsible authorities to meet Mr. Eliot's protest, let alone to avert the irremediable degradation to which their action has exposed the University."

TSE concluded the matter with a letter to Rev. White on 7 Mar: "Thank you very much for your generous amends in the March Blackfriars. What is a much deeper gratification to me, however, is to feel that you, and therefore I trust some of your readers, share my feelings about the new Oxford."

To the Editor of *The New English Weekly*[1]

The New English Weekly, 12 (17 Mar 1938) 459

Sir, – Having in mind the attention which you have recently given to the relations of Agriculture and Industry, I was struck by a note in *The Evening News* of March 7. Mr. Robert Holland-Martin, Chairman of the Southern Railway, had been addressing members of the British Railway Stockholders' Union at a lunch. He observed that his railway's electrification policy had proved a "gold mine"; and added that the company was "fortunate in having and, possibly, in *making* (italics mine) a very large development of suburban London south of the Thames."[2] It would seem, therefore that the railways not only have a considerable interest in the further suburbanisation of greater Greater London, but make an overt policy of it. Other authorities, I believe, have expressed alarm at the concentration of such a large proportion of the population in south-eastern England.

Mr. Holland-Martin is also a country squire in Gloucestershire, but I do not know how much interest he takes in agriculture.[3]

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. Under the editorial heading "Who Controls Population-Distribution?"

2. Robert Holland-Martin, CB (1872-1944), former chair of Martin's Bank, served as chair of Southern Railway from 1935 until his death in office. Established in 1923 as a passenger line, by 1938, it had built the largest electrified railway system in the United Kingdom, serving Brighton, Bournemouth, and other southern stations. The report in the *Evening News* of 7 Mar, under the heading "Southern Railway's 'Gold Mine' / What Electrification Has Done," concluded: "Future profits of the company would depend to a large extent on the population trend, but he did not share the prophecies that the population of the country would suffer a heavy decline in the immediate future."

3. Holland-Martin actually lived not in Gloucestershire but across the border in nearby Overbury Court, Tewkesbury, Worcestershire, where he had inherited the family home and 4,500-acre estate; he served as High Sheriff of Worcestershire in 1938.

On a Recent Piece of Criticism[1]

Purpose, 10 (Apr/June 1938) 90-94

It is often said that the standards of literary criticism are lower than they used to be. I think that criticism, like poetry, is healthier at the top than it was a generation ago, but that there is a wider gap between the best and the second-best. If the standards of the best are higher, those of the second-best – week-to-week journalism – have sunk. Whispers often circulate about the lack of disinterestedness on the part of reviewers, about cabals and private motives, about the pliancy of periodicals in the interest of advertising revenue, and so on. Such scandals, if and when they are justified, are serious enough: but to my mind they present the less depressing aspect. If we could maintain that the trouble with journalistic criticism was simply that it is all in the wrong hands, that would imply at least that we had only to turn the rascals out, and replace them with honest men, and all would be well. But what if the honest men are incompetent critics too? What if they are not so much "bad critics," as frequently people who do not know what the function of criticism is, and who, whether they praise or condemn, do so without relevance? The menace is not so much public immorality, as a relaxation of intelligence on the part of the half-educated, writing hurriedly for the quarter-educated. The danger of debilitated criticism does not come from any one direction: it is all about us, with the decline of the standards of higher education in the background; and it is something which we have all consciously to resist, if we are not to be guilty of writing the kind of criticism I have in mind.

Such considerations are given immediate point by a short essay by Mr. G. W. Stonier in the last number of *Purpose*, entitled "The Mystery of Ezra Pound."[2] It is an article which I commend for study to young critics. Mr. Stonier is, I believe, an honest critic; I have the impression that he has done some good work – I know that several years ago he wrote an intelligent review of my translation of *Anabase*, in which he made some useful suggestions of which I have subsequently taken advantage.[3] I am not, on the present occasion, discussing Mr. Stonier, but a particular article by Mr. Stonier. (This is a very subtle critical distinction.) I have read through the article several times; and it says just one thing: that Mr. Stonier does not like

Mr. Pound's poetry. There is no harm in that, except that he need not have taken six pages to make just one remark; but what is dangerous is, that to the hasty reader Mr. Stonier may *seem* to have given reasons for his dislike. To me, it is occasion for distress that a reputable critic should dismiss in six pages of pert frivolity an author who, at the very least, has given thirty-odd years of close study to his art, and who, at the very least, occupies a high place in the poetical history of a generation.

Mr. Stonier begins by asking, in effect, what has happened to Pound between 1908 and 1937?[4] This is an interesting question, which Mr. Stonier has not succeeded in answering either profoundly or lucidly. Something is bound to happen to any intelligent man in twenty-nine years; and what happens to a man of importance in the literary world is of public interest. But after a brief sketch of the early aesthete – "a pointed beard, exile daintily hieratic" [21] – Mr. Stonier merely complains that Pound has become a mystery: apparently for the reason that he lives in Italy. "That there *are* two Pounds no one, of course, would deny," says Mr. Stonier. It is rash to deny a statement which one does not understand, but why should we accept this assumption until we know what is meant by it? As near as I can get to a meaning, it is this: that there is an early "Browning-cum-imagist" Pound, producing work which is rather like a rough outline for Eliot to fill in; and that this is the Pound that Eliot has "seen and encouraged" [22]. Some evidence for this is found in the fact that Eliot, in his introduction to Pound's *Selected Poems*, has quoted only from the early Pound.[5] And I think that Mr. Stonier means that there is a later Pound of the *Cantos*, with whom Eliot apparently has nothing to do, and whom "we" find unreadable.

Mr. Stonier is mistaken, both about my relations with Pound in the past, and about my valuation of the different periods of Pound's poetry – if, that is, I have understood Mr. Stonier. (I have the impression that Mr. Stonier's knowledge of literary events before 1918 or so is at secondhand, since he speaks of *The Egoist* as having succeeded *Blast*.)[6] I was introduced to *Personae* and *Exultations* in 1910, while still an undergraduate at Harvard. The poems did not then excite me, any more than did the poetry of Yeats: I was too much engrossed in working out the implications of Laforgue. I considered them, however, the only interesting poems by a contemporary that I had found. My indebtedness to Pound is of two kinds: first, in my literary criticism (this debt has been pointed out by Mr. Porteus and Mr. Mario Praz);[7] and second, in his criticism of my poetry in our talk, and his indications of desirable territories to explore. This indebtedness extends

from 1915 to 1922, after which period Mr. Pound left England, and our meetings became infrequent. My greatest debt was for his improvement of *The Waste Land*.[8] But as for the poetry of "the early Pound," there are only three or four original pieces that have made any deep impression upon me; and the Pound whom I find congenial is the author of *Mauberley*, *Propertius*, and the *Cantos*.[9]

In passing, Mr. Stonier succeeds in getting in a little dig at Mr. Leavis. I have had my own disagreements with Mr. Leavis; and Mr. Leavis, at one time or another, has expressed disapproval of nearly everybody; but it is impossible not to respect the work that he has done with *Scrutiny*, and his rather lonely battle for literacy. To dismiss a man who has done such work, with the words, "Mr. F. R. Leavis, who can be trusted to come in on a good thing" [22] – a knowing wink to the reader – is to make a sneer do the work of a demonstration. It is an ambiguous phrase, which may mean (1) Mr. Leavis has no mind of his own, (2) the good things that he comes in on are often not good things at all, but merely fashions of the moment: or it may have both meanings. But however he inculpates Mr. Leavis, Mr. Stonier seems to assign to me the chief responsibility for having put over Mr. Pound on a snobbish and gullible public. He says, of Pound's expanding reputation, "The dedication of *The Waste Land*, 'il miglior fabbro,' no doubt had something to do with it; a tip like that, to the Eliot initiate, was far too good to miss" [22]. Mr. Stonier, apparently, is not an Eliot initiate: or he might have discovered that the phrase, not only as used by Dante, but as quoted by myself, had a precise meaning.[10] I did not mean to imply that Pound was only that: but I wished at that moment to honour the technical mastery and critical ability manifest in his own work, which had also done so much to turn *The Waste Land* from a jumble of good and bad passages into a poem.

This technical ability Mr. Stonier does not explicitly recognise. Had he acknowledged Mr. Pound's influence on contemporary versification – much more important, I think, than that of Mr. Yeats – he might have found it more difficult to dismiss him as a "poetaster" [25]. Instead of attempting any study of the development of Mr. Pound's versification (the work in *Cathay* marks, I think, a point of capital importance) he gives three quotations from an early (and I think not very good) poem called "La Fraisne," written rather under the influence of the Yeats of the period.[11] It is a poem written long before Mr. Pound had ever heard of me, but Mr. Stonier thinks he finds in it some anticipations of the way in which I was to write some

years later. What Mr. Stonier seems to suggest is, that I was imitating Pound, though somehow I did it much better.[12] I do not see how anyone can read "La Fraisne" through, and then the poems of mine in which Mr. Stonier finds his parallels, and yet maintain that there is anything in common. The line quoted from "Gerontion" was lifted bodily from a Life of Edward Fitzgerald – I think the one in the "English Men of Letters" series.[13] All that it has to do with the line from "La Fraisne" is that both are supposed to be spoken by old men, saying that they are old men.[14] The line quoted from *The Waste Land* is an adaptation of a phrase of Webster which Webster uses with quite a different meaning ("Is the wind in that door still?").[15] The parallel between the third passage from "La Fraisne" and the passage from "Prufrock" consists simply in the repeated use of three dots. That Pound was Poe to my Baudelaire is simply nonsense: and what's more, it's not so true of Baudelaire as all that.[16]

One test of good criticism is that the intelligent reader should derive some profit from reading it even if he does not agree with the critic's verdict upon any particular author. It should at least stimulate one to thinking out more clearly one's grounds of disagreement, or bring to one's attention something that one had overlooked. Both Mr. Allen Tate and Mr. R. P. Blackmur have written criticism of Pound's poetry containing strictures more serious than anything that Mr. Stonier's petulant levity can adduce.[17] These authors both know their texts and have given considerable thought to their judgments and they cannot be dismissed without an equal knowledge of the texts, and equal mental labour, on the part of their readers. Whether we ultimately accept the judgments of a good critic or not, we have had mental exercise in the reading and profit from the struggle. Mr. Stonier's article has this frequent weakness of the bad criticism of our time, that it requires no mental effort on the part of the reader. Given a slight prejudice against Pound's poetry, or a willingness to believe that something rather difficult is not worth reading, the reader has the pleasure of being presented with a belief without the trouble of thinking for himself. But good criticism of anything difficult or new, cannot be quite such an easy reading as this.

I said at the beginning that I was writing, not about Mr. Stonier, but about a particular article by Mr. Stonier. The reader who has digested that remark may proceed to masticate another: that the subject of the present paper is the article by Mr. Stonier, and not the poetry of Mr. Pound.

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. A response to "The Mystery of Ezra Pound" (*Purpose*, 10.1 [1938], 21-26), by George Walter Stonier (1903-85) – literary critic, novelist, and literary editor of *The New Statesman*.

2. On 9 Jan 1938, TSE wrote to Desmond Hawkins, who had become Literary Editor of *Purpose* in 1936 under General Editor W. T. Symons: "I wrote a letter to Ezra and then scrapped it, because with such a proud and touchy man as he, it is just as likely that a well-meant intervention may only incense him more. I now think it best to wait; and if you do get a roaring letter from him about Stonier, let me know at once, and I will then try to soothe him down. It is obviously much better that you should print a letter from me than one from Ezra – better for Ez I mean." On 4 Feb, TSE again wrote to Hawkins: "I will try to let you have a nice little article about Stonier as soon as possible. I think it ought to be framed in such a way as to be rather a reproof of Stonier than a defence of Pound, because everybody seems to discount now what I say in praise of Pound's poetry."

3. Stonier reviewed TSE's translation of St.-John Perse's *Anabasis* (Faber, 1930) in *The New Statesman and Nation*, 13 (6 Feb 1937), 212, 214.

> [Eliot] has, however, made mistakes. Here are two:
>
> p. 41. Le vieillard bouge des paupières dans la lumière jaune; la femme s'étire sur son ongle.
>
> The old man stirs his eyelids in the yellow light; the woman stretches herself from nail to nail. (Should be, "the woman polishes her nails.")
>
> p. 67. L'hermite [*sic*] orné de mains de fille.
>
> The hermit bedecked with the hands of girls. (But the hands are his: "the hermit graced with a girl's hands.")
>
> Other examples: p. 25 "aisselle," on its second appearance, means not "armpit" but the fork of a branch; p. 67 "joueur aux goblets," must be, not "player of the game of goblets" but "thimblerigger" or "conjurer." I have noted half a dozen similar inaccuracies, for which there is no place in this review (212, 214).

4. Beginning with Edith Sitwell's evocation of Pound in 1908 – "a new poet who, heedless of wickets and careless of tea parties, walked with a natural, free, and beautiful movement" – Stonier continues: "A wistful perspective, with the Poet Beautiful at the other end: it seems to take us a very long way back. How different the Pound of to-day! Who, then, could have foreseen the spluttering typewriter, the bold oaths, the after-dinner *Cantos*, the retinue of 'active' poets, belonging to Pound 1937? What has happened in the meanwhile?" (21).

5. Introduction to *Selected Poems*, by Ezra Pound (3.517). There, Stonier claims, TSE "has argued, brilliantly and persuasively, the case in favour [of later Pound as better]. *Lustra*, *Hugh Selwyn Mauberley*, *The Cantos* – for Mr. Eliot they represent three distinct steps forward. Do we find *The Cantos* unreadable? Mr. Eliot assures us 'they are the only poems of some length by any of my contemporaries that I can read with enjoyment and admiration.' The scope of the book . . . makes it impossible for Mr. Eliot to cite the *Cantos* in his introduction. But he does not quote from *Mauberley* either; he quotes, in fact, exclusively from the earlier Pound" (22).

6. "This was about the time of *The Egoist*, succeeding *Blast*" (21). Beginning in Jan, *The Egoist* ran as a fortnightly review during 1914, and then as a monthly from 1915 to 1919; only two issues of *BLAST* appeared, in July of 1914 and 1915.

7. Hugh Gordon Porteus's direct claim that TSE's literary criticism is indebted to Pound is untraced; however, Porteus does contrast the criticism of TSE and Pound in his book *Wyndham Lewis: A Discursive Exposition* (London: Desmond Harmsworth, 1932): "[Orthodox criticism] insists on the 'how' and not on the 'what' of expression. Mr. Eliot properly insists on the discipline of vision: but there must be vision to discipline. It is no doubt proper that minor poets should be persuaded to write good verse instead of bad poetry; and that Ezra Pound, a man of impeccable taste and no vision, should insist on keeping clean the tools of thought rather than on using them" (111-12). Porteus compares the poetic technique of the two authors throughout that volume and in an earlier essay: in *The Waste Land*, "the reduction and subsequent transmutation of borrowed coin was occasionally imperfect, though imperfect only when compared with the Cantos of Ezra Pound – *il miglior fabbro del parlar materno*" ("T. S. Eliot," *The Twentieth Century* [Oct 1931], 7-11; here 11).

In his article "T. S. Eliot and Dante," Mario Praz explains Pound's influence on TSE: "Not the least reason why Eliot's relation to Dante is out of the beaten track of Dante-worship lies, no doubt, in the manner in which he discovered him through Pound. . . . [O]ne may trace to Pound that aspect of Eliot which consists in investing a quotation in a foreign language with a significance infinitely more potent than its verbal import, a significance which in Eliot achieves an emblematical pregnancy. // Traces of initiation by Pound are to be seen not only in this peculiar attitude to the musical spell of the verse, but also in the critical ideas Eliot has been ex*pound*ing" on Dante in his essays (*Southern Review*, 3 [1937], 525-48; here 526-27). As Praz acknowledges in a footnote, TSE had explained Pound's influence on his work in a letter to Praz (22 May 1936). Praz's article was later expanded for his book *The Flaming Heart* (1958).

8. The evidence of Pound's editing the early drafts of *The Waste Land* can be observed in *WLF*.

9. In his introduction to Pound's *Selected Poems* (1928), TSE described *Hugh Selywn Mauberley* (1920) as "much the finest poem, I believe, before the *Cantos*" (3.522). In a testimonial in support of the first American edition of Pound's *A Draft of XXX Cantos*, TSE wrote: "I have preached the *Cantos* for some years now to young practitioners as well as tried to tell them what I owed to Pound in London, Paris, Excideuil and Rapallo. . . . I find that, with the exception of *Mauberley*, there is no other contemporary – with disrespect for none, for I include myself – whom I ever want to re-read for pleasure" (4.506). TSE had published a number of Pound's *Cantos* in the *Criterion*, although he declined to publish Canto 31 when it was offered to him in 1931 (*L5* 454). Even though he publicly praised the *Cantos*, privately he had reservations. Late in life, TSE wrote to F. R. Leavis: "I agree with you about Pound and the aridity of the *Cantos*, with the exception of at least one item and a few lines from one of the so-called *Pisan Cantos* where it seems to me also that a touch of humanity breaks through; I mean the lovely verse of "Bow down thy vanity" and the reference to the Negro who knocked him up a table when he was in the cage at Pisa. And, of course, Pound's incomparable sense of rhythm carries a lot over. But I do find the *Cantos*, apart from that exceptional moment, quite arid and depressing" (28 Nov 1963).

10. *CPP* 59 / *Poems1* 53. The Italian phrase is a modification of line 117 of Dante's *Purgatorio* XXVI.

11. "La Fraisne" was published in 1908, in Pound's first collection, *A Lume Spento*. TSE discusses Yeats's influence on Pound's "La Fraisne" in "Ezra Pound: His Metric and Poetry"

(1.630). He discusses the place of *Cathay* in Pound's "matured genius" in "A Note on Ezra Pound" (1.752).

12. "Now suppose you came across that passage [from "La Fraisne"], never having seen it before, in an anthology, and it was signed with an unknown name – what would you say? Surely, that the writer had imitated Eliot, substituting a faintly magaziney sentiment for the sharp nostalgia of the original" (23).

13. TSE's "Gerontion": "Here I am, an old man in a dry month, / Being read to by a boy, waiting for rain" (*CPP* 37 / *Poems1* 31). A. C. Benson's *Edward Fitzgerald* (London: Macmillan, 1905): "Here he sits, in a dry month, old and blind, being read to by a country boy, longing for rain" (142, quoted in *Poems1* 470).

14. Stonier quotes the opening lines of "La Fraisne": "For I was a gaunt, grave councillor, / Being in all things wise, and very old" (23).

15. TSE's *The Waste Land*, II: "The wind under the door. / 'What is that noise now? What is the wind doing?'" (*CPP 65* / *Poems1* 59). In John Webster's *The Devil's Law Case* (1623), the second surgeon asks: "Is the wind in that door still?" (quoted in *Poems1* 632).

16. "[Pound] has served as Poe to Eliot's Baudelaire: that is the relationship, more awkward from the fact that in this case both poets are living. . . . Pound, like Poe, deserves the credit of an originality great enough to feed a better poet" (24).

17. Allen Tate's review of Pound's *A Draft of XXX Cantos* (1930) appeared in the *Nation* (10 June 1931) as "Ezra Pound's Golden Ass" (632-34; rpt. as "Ezra Pound" in *Reactionary Essays on Poetry and Ideas*, New York: Scribner's, 1936, 43-51). While not entirely negative, Tate's review includes such criticisms as: "The cantos are talk, talk, talk; not by any one in particular to any one else in particular; they are just rambling talk" (632; 44); "He is probably one of the two or three living Americans who will be remembered as poets of the first order. Yet there is no reason to infer from that that Mr. Pound, outside his craft (or outside his written conversation) knows in the least what he is doing or saying" (633; 50).

Richard P. Blackmur's "Masks of Ezra Pound" appeared in *Hound & Horn* 7.2 (Jan-Mar 1934, 177-212): "Mr. Pound put together the materials and roused the interests appropriate to a narrative, and then deliberately refused the materials a narrative form, without, however, destroying the interests that expected it. Whether intentionally or not, it is the presence of this defeated expectation which holds these Cantos together. That is the attraction which the parts exert over each other; an attraction which constantly makes the Cantos seem on the point of re-arranging themselves in an order quite different from the printed order, and quite different, also, from the historical order upon which the printed order is founded. But this third order is not achieved; there is a clog, a stoppage, at the point of crisis, and the Cantos fall back into the dismay of choices that cannot be made" (200).

A Commentary

The Criterion: A Literary Review, 17 (Apr 1938) 478-85

Anyone who has questioned the benefits to be obtained from the Nuffield Endowments of Oxford, or the National Theatre, should be at least sceptical of the Music and Drama Bill, a measure (as *The Times* newspaper of the 10th February informs us) prepared by the League of Audiences, an organization from which in the past I have received leaflets which I fear I have treated with inadequate attention.[1] I have reason to hope that others, beyond those mentioned in the previous sentence, will have their doubts: for the Editor of *The Church Times*, whose mind is easy about the Nuffield Endowments,[2] devotes a leading article in his issue of the 11th February to arousing dubiety in the minds of his readers on the subject of the Music and Drama Bill.[3] "Support from Members of All Parties" is the sub-headline which *The Times* gives its report of a meeting held at the House of Commons to support this Bill. I suggest that since any measure supported by *one* party needs to be scrutinized carefully, *a fortiori* a measure supported by "members of all parties" requires to be scrutinized with threefold (or should I say manifold?) care.

I am happy to be at one with the Editor of *The Church Times* in this matter. Three months ago I suggested the possibility that the creation of a National Theatre was a step which might lead to the eventual creation of a Ministry of Fine Arts. I note that *The Times* (apparently quoting Mr. Alfred Wareing, hon. organizing secretary of the League of Audiences) says that the object of the Music and Drama Bill is "to obtain Government recognition of music and drama without setting up a Ministry of Fine Arts."[4] It may fairly be observed, I think, that measures intended to do one thing without leading to another thing, may ultimately implement that other thing which they intend to make unnecessary. I do not know whether Mr. Wareing (if the words are his) and the League of Audiences have any positive objection to a Ministry of Fine Arts, or whether they merely wish to assure us that their aim is not to "set up more machinery." But it seems to me possible that, once the Government takes an active and overt part in the cultivation of the Arts, such confusion will ensue that in time there will be a call for a "dictator of the Arts" (will it, by that time, be Mr. Hore-Belisha or Mr. Duff Cooper?) to put things to rights.[5]

It is premature to pass any opinions upon a measure of which so little is known. The matter was raised in the Church Assembly by the Archbishop of York, moving a resolution pledging general (why general?) support to the principle of the Music and Drama Bill promoted by the League of Audiences. The spark was quenched by the Archbishop of Canterbury (I am referring now to *The Times* newspaper of February 11) who observed that the Assembly was not sufficiently informed about the proposed Bill to justify passing the motion.[6] If the Assembly did not know that much, I may be excused for knowing less. But, from the report of the meeting at the House of Commons (of "members of all parties") I learn that the Bill is maintained on two grounds: first, that its operation would

> encourage and assist the organization of companies of the highest standard to produce notable English works in drama and music and present them oversea, where they would help to bring a better understanding of our national outlook and so help to keep the peace of the world and preserve the spirit of community which was (*sic*) the support of the India, Dominion and Colonial Offices as well as the Overseas Trade Department,

and second that it would

> increase the amenities of rural life by visits of performers, orchestras, brass bands, and thus helping (*sic*) to arrest the drift to the towns.[7]

Let us, by all means, have an Imperial Campaign of Drama, with a picked repertory company performing *Candida*, *Hassan*, *The Tragedy of Nan* and presumably *Hamlet*.[8] Let Mr. John Gielgud and Miss Peggy Ashcroft respond to the irresistible appeal of patriotism and peace and receive curtain calls from enthusiastic audiences of Bengalis and Gujuratis, and from inhabitants of Malta, Mauritius and Tobago: to what will this avail? And to what is it meant to avail? Will "a better understanding of our national outlook" (whatever that is) follow? And does a better understanding of the national outlook of another country always help to keep the peace? The celebrated radio-station of Bari is presumably intended to give the Moslem a "better understanding" of the national outlook of Italy.[9] One remembers, on the other hand, that during the age when English and French thought and art influenced each other most deeply – from the time of Charles II to the French Revolution, the governments of the two countries were frequently at loggerheads, and sometimes at war. Possibly one inducement to

us to favour this Music and Drama Bill is that it will help to counteract foreign propaganda. Possibly: but is that not done better if done less conspicuously, and better done by some person or persons not forming part of a "Commission"? And as for the real influence of the Art of a country *as* Art, that seems to depend in the long run upon the quality of the artists we can produce. This is the real reason for the dominance of Italy in the Renaissance – and even at times when the country was overrun by the French or the Spanish; this is the real reason for the dominance of France in the plastic arts in the nineteenth century, even when overrun by Prussians; this is the real reason for the popularity of Shakespeare in Germany – and of the popularity of P. G. Wodehouse in America.[10]

I have grave doubts about the importance of what is called "mutual understanding" – not always very different from the selling of a pup – in preserving peace. *The Spectator* believes in mutual understanding and in "setting up" (on February 11), for it says

> If there were some second Lord Nuffield to turn vision into reality we should see arise in London a great centre where Anglo-American, Anglo-French and Anglo-German and a score of other societies for mutual understanding would have their offices and their organisation, with theatres, film-projectors, libraries and other amenities for their common use. From it the interpretation of Britain would be directed with intelligence and knowledge, and through it our own country would learn, as it so greatly needs to, as well as teach.[11]

What a fantasy! I note that the great centre would naturally be in London, not in New York, Paris or Berlin; and I seem to note also that the interpretation of Britain to other countries is the first aim, and the understanding of other countries the second. But if we understood other countries better, would we like them any better? – though we might be better able to get the better of them. "Mutual understanding" seems to me likely to be merely a nice way of ignoring economic conflicts between countries. *The Spectator* article (which, as it is unsigned, carries a certain editorial authority) is more or less about Sir Robert Vansittart.[12] I should be sorry to see so distinguished a Civil Servant appearing in the role of publicity agent for a troupe interpreting *Candida*, *Hassan*, and *The Tragedy of Nan* (to say nothing of *Hamlet*), to foreign countries (just as I should be sorry to see English drama put to political uses): I could only bear it if I felt that this post of press-agent was merely a blind for some more covert and dignified activity.

However that may be, to return to the Music and Drama Bill, I am sorry to see a project for advertising Britain abroad identified with one for improving Britain at home. "The drift to the towns" is something which has been mentioned with anxiety in this Commentary. But is the Music and Drama Bill the right way to stop it? The idea of increasing the amenities of village life by diverting the villagers with visits of "performers, orchestras, brass-bands" reminds me of a series of drawings by the great German draughtsman and comic artist, Wilhelm Busch.[13] The series represents a baby crying itself into paroxysms, with the efforts of its parents to distract it by toys, singing, holding a watch to its ear, etc., and by dosing it with medicine. In the end we are shown that the trouble with the baby is that it has a safety-pin stuck in its bottom. When our village-life has a safety-pin stuck in its bottom, what is the good of trying to amuse it by sending bands of "performers," even shock-troopers of the BBC, scouring the country to caper and trill for the diversion of the villagers?

The two most serious long-distance problems we have, apart from the ultimate religious problem, are the problem of Education and the problem of the Land – meaning by the latter the problem, not merely of how to grow enough food, but of how to obtain a proper balance between country and town life. The weakness of most suggestions that are made for the preservation or the revival of country life, seems to me to be that they are made by people who have an urban outlook. They tend to conceive the problem as one of how to persuade country men and women to stay in the country by bringing the pleasures of the town to their doors. Some have thought that the wireless would do it: what the wireless can do is to tempt country folk to stay up too late when they ought to go to bed in order to get up early. I wonder how many of the people who advance schemes for "improving the amenities" of village life and inducing people to stay in villages, are themselves in any real sense villagers? How many of our legislators can really be called "country gentry"? – I mean, people who have been brought up in the country, whose substance comes from the cultivation of the land – people who are, economically, as much bound to the land as their tenants or their tenants' labourers: I do not mean retired bankers and industrialists who have become landowners or who own land maintained out of dividends from the City. I should myself find it as difficult to live in the country as to give up smoking – more difficult, for my urban habits are of much longer standing than the habit of smoking: they are, indeed, pre-natal. But I can at least see that *living* in the country must be something quite different

from *living* in the town; that many benevolent people who want to make country life more endurable are merely aiming to make it suburban; and that a genuine country life must be one which is in a position to provide its own amenities, and to do without London newspapers, Langham Place, and Whitehall. And I believe that the real and spontaneous country life – not *legislated* country life – is the right life for the great majority in any nation.

I should like to call attention to one curious little point. In the Church Assembly, the Archbishop of York is said to have referred "with regret to the tendency of mechanized entertainment to take the place of the more personal contacts that were established between musicians and actors and their audiences."[14] And on the previous day Mr. Wareing (hon. organizing secretary of the League of Audiences) appears to have said:

> The need of the Bill became more urgent as leisure increased. The majority turned when their working day was over to machines as the easiest way of escape.

It is all the more gratifying to read in the same report that *leaders in the mechanical amusement industry supported the proposed measure.*[15]

As I mentioned above, the Archbishop of Canterbury considered that the Church Assembly was not sufficiently informed about the proposed Bill to justify passing a motion in favour of it. I suspect that the information is neither withheld, nor forthcoming; but that it simply does not exist. As I suspect that the National Theatre project started simply in the mind of a benevolent man considering how to dispose of his money, without any deep thought on the subject having preceded the benefaction, and that the reasons for building and endowing a National Theatre have been discovered since, so I fear that this, or some similar Bill will be passed, with "support from members of all parties"; and the problem of how to use the money in the interest of Music and Drama will first be faced by the "Commission" set up after the money has been allocated. It is a pity that action should take precedence over thought.

Anyone whose thought is at all stimulated by this problem should read a valuable little book by J. L. Benvenisti: *The Absent-minded Revolution*.[16*] (I am not reviewing or even "noticing" the book, I am merely making use of it.) Mr. Benvenisti makes some very interesting observations on the notion of the National Investment Board. If you will read his book, you will, I hope, see some point in my calling the Commission to be set up if the Music and Drama Bill is passed, a "National Investment Board" of the

Arts. The more the State takes over, the less will be the private initiative. Mr. Benvenisti quotes sentences by Mr. Cole (who apparently favours something like a National Investment Board), which might be adapted to apply to a National Music and Drama Board. According to Mr. Benvenisti, Mr. Cole says:

> [U]nsound or socially undesirable forms of investment could be *prevented* from crowding more useful schemes out of the market.[17]
>
> By these means the state can begin investment into the right channels.[18]
>
> What should be produced depends on how the power to purchase is distributed among the people.[19]

Translate the National Investment Board (or Mr. Cole's version of it) into terms of the Music and Drama Bill:

> [U]nsound or socially undesirable forms of music or drama (unsound or socially undesirable according to the opinion of the eight Commissions[20]* appointed by the Crown – i.e. nominally by the Prime Minister but actually by civil servants whom one will never be able to trace) could be *prevented* from crowding more useful music and drama out of the market.
>
> By these means the State can begin to guide music and drama into the right channels.

The last sentence is more difficult to translate, but it might read:

> What should be produced in the way of music and drama depends upon what the people is willing to have imposed upon it, and upon what the eight Commissions think that the people ought to see and hear.

T. S. E.

NOTES

1. On 10 Feb 1938, under the heading "Proposed Music and Drama Bill / Support from Members of All Parties," the *Times* reported that members of Parliament met in the House of Commons the previous day in support of the Bill prepared by the League of Audiences, founded in 1934 "to obtain Government recognition of drama and music" (9). In his "Commentary" of Jan 1938, TSE expressed his misgivings about the potential consequences of large personal bequests for specific projects, such as the Nuffield Endowments at Oxford, and his concern for placing the National Theatre under the centralized authority of a minister of fine arts (5.589).

2. In the *Church Times* of 7 Jan, the editor had taken issue with TSE's position on the Nuffield Endowments in his Jan "Commentary": "Mr. T. S. Eliot has a kind but critical comment

in *The Criterion* on Viscount Nuffield's generosity to Oxford. Frankly, we find him rather perverse in trying to be more Oxonian than the Oxonians. . . . Is the position of the Humanities really more secure when they are segregated from scientific studies? Is that the best way to make them exercise a humanizing influence on the rude practitioners of science? . . . Mr. Eliot's objection to the new Nuffield College, that it is to be controlled by the University, is far-fetched" (3).

3. In a leader titled "Music and Drama Bill" in the *Church Times* of 11 Jan 1938, the editor declared that Commissioners to be appointed under the Bill "cannot be trusted to have control of the arts of music and drama because they are living and creative forces. It is true that the Bill does not propose control but only safeguarding, but once let Commissioners (with a subsidy of a million and a half pounds and an annual income of £50,000) have a footing in the theatre, and much of that spontaneity and creativeness which the Archbishop [of York] desires to foster will be destroyed" (148).

4. According to the *Times* of 10 Feb ("Proposed Music and Drama Bill"), the theater entrepreneur Alfred Wareing (1876-1942) further stated that "the Bill came not from vested interests or professions but from the electorate. It had the approval and support of a number of important and widely different bodies, as well as leaders of thought and progress. Leaders in the mechanical amusement industry supported the proposed measure. . . . Eight commissions appointed by the Crown would be charged with the duty of encouraging and promoting those arts and the composition, production, and presentation of musical and dramatic works. . . . The commissioners would be concerned with humanity, and would have nothing to do with bricks and mortar" (9).

5. Leslie Hore-Belisha (1893-1957), a founder-member of the National Liberal Party, served as the British Secretary of State for War (1937-40); the Conservative Party politician Duff Cooper (1890-1954) preceded him in that post (1935-37).

6. At the Spring Session of the Church Assembly in Westminster on 10 Feb, with the Archbishop of Canterbury (Dr. Cosmo Lang) presiding, the *Times* reported on 11 Feb under the heading "Church Property," that after the Archbishop of York (Dr. William Temple) moved a resolution urging the government to pledge its general support to the Music and Drama Bill, the Archbishop of Canterbury "deprecated the passing of the motion" and suggested that it should be withdrawn. "The Archibishop of York thereupon withdrew the motion" (8).

7. "Proposed Music and Drama Bill," 9

8. Shaw's *Candida*, first performed in 1895, first published in 1898; James Elroy Flecker's verse drama, *Hassan: The Story of Hassan of Bagdad* (1922), first performed in 1923; John Masefield's *The Tragedy of Nan*, published and first performed in 1908. John Gielgud's reputation as a Shakespearean actor soared following his playing of Hamlet in London and on tour in 1934; he and Peggy Ashcroft (1907-91) were then performing Shakespeare and other playwrights in repertory together in Gielgud's own company at the Queen's Theatre, London.

9. Radio Bari in southern Italy began broadcasting in 1932 to Mediterranean and Middle Eastern countries. Under the fascist regime in 1934, its music and other programs were accompanied by propaganda broadcasts.

10. P. G. (Pelham Grenville) Wodehouse (1881-1975), English novelist, humorist, and lyricist, worked with Jerome Kern, Guy Bolton, and other American songwriters, composing lyrics for musical comedies in America during and after World War I. From 1929 to 1934 he lived in Hollywood, writing for MGM.

11. "Making Britain Understand," *The Spectator*, no. 2,720 (11 Feb 1938), 213-14; here 213.

12. Diplomat, historian, and man of letters Sir Robert Vansittart (1851-1957), styled Baron Vansittart after 1941, served as Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs from 1930 to 1938.

The editorial begins by noting "the announcement that Sir Robert Vansittart has been appointed chairman of a committee set up to co-ordinate the activities of various bodies already engaged in interpreting Britain in various ways abroad" (213). The appointment is seen as an "essential step" in recommending "practical measures" to prevent misinterpretation of "British motives"; the editorial concludes by urging Vansittart to ensure that news of British policies and aims to countries with British interests come from the right national sources: "If Sir Robert Vansittart is wise he will make study of this vital problem his first activity" (214).

13. Wilhelm Busch (1832-1908), poet, painter, and draughtsman, was the illustrator of cautionary tales for children and adults; the largest collection of his works is in the Wilhelm Busch Museum in Hanover, founded in 1937.

14. "Church Property" (8)

15. "Proposed Music and Drama Bill" (9); TSE's italics

16*. TSE's note: "Sands [1937]. 3s. 6d. net. Mr. Benvenisti may be described as a distributist. It should be added, for those who consider distributism an obsolete nostrum of the generation of Chesterton and Belloc, that Mr. Benvenisti is a distributist of the present generation. The unaccepted, heterodox or pariah philosophies and theories of political economy, must be perpetually vigilant to keep themselves adapted to the actual changes in the world, and to express the same principles in terms apprehensible to people whose minds are immersed in the current facts. Social Credit, for instance, seems to me constantly in danger of petrifying in a form fifteen or twenty years old. The danger (if not the fatality) of orthodox economies is that they become completely dominated by the 'facts'; so they become, like politicians, merely instruments for keeping the machine going from to-day to to-morrow. It is most important that we should have heretical theories: but they become futile when they fall into the orthodoxy of heresy, and out of touch with the facts. With this in mind I recommend Mr. Benvenisti's book. And he has some very pertinent remarks on the subject of 'Education.'" James L. Benvenisti (b. 1890) also authored *The Iniquitous Contract: An Analysis of Usury and Maldistribution* in 1937.

17. TSE's italics

18. *Read*: "By these methods the State can begin to guide investment"

19. Benvenisti quotes these statements in a note (53-54), taken from G. D. H. Cole's discussion of a National Investment Board in *The People's Front* (London: Gollancz, 1937), 245-46. Benvenisti's note is appended to the following statement of his own: "It is clear . . . that the National Investment Board, acting in conjunction with spending departments, can pretty well determine the size of nett real personal income, and say what part of the community's product is to be consumed, and what part is to go into durable goods, productive or otherwise" (53-54).

20*. TSE's note: "This may be a misprint in *The Times*. Perhaps it should read 'eight Commissioners.' No matter."

Report of a lecture on George Herbert

The Salisbury and Winchester Journal (27 May 1938) 12

TSE delivered the lecture in the Chapter House of Salisbury Cathedral on 25 May 1938, as reported under the heading "Mr. T. S. Eliot on 'George Herbert' / Brilliant Lecture to Friends of Salisbury Cathedral / 'A Tough Man in a Tough Age.'" The typescript of the lecture has not survived; TSE may have given it to the reporter, as he had done on other occasions. The following descriptive summary of the occasion and participants preceded the lengthy quotation from the address:

> Mr. T. S. Eliot, the poet and author of "Murder in the Cathedral," gave a lecture on "George Herbert," the 17th century poet-priest of Bemerton, at the Chapter House, Salisbury, on Wednesday morning.
>
> This was one of the special events arranged by the Dean of Salisbury (the Very Rev. E. L. Henderson) in connection with the annual festival of the Friends of Salisbury Cathedral, and it followed the annual business meeting of the Association, which, with other events of the festival, is reported separately on another page.
>
> The Bishop of Salisbury (Dr. E. Neville Lovett) presided. In addition to the Friends there were also present at the lecture students of the Salisbury Diocesan Training College and girls from the Godolphin school.
>
> Mr. Eliot, after his introductory remarks on Herbert's local associations, said:

"I have been reading the poetry of Herbert's period, over a long enough span of years to be able to observe a considerable development in my own appreciation and judgment.[1] It is not only greater familiarity, but, I hope, greater maturity of mind and sensibility – for sensibility as well as intelligence should mature – which has brought me, to concede to Herbert as a religious poet a pre-eminence among his contemporaries and followers. I am, therefore, at the stage of asking for a revision of his reputation; feeling, as I do, that he has been not so much critically as implicitly underrated.

"For the degree of appreciation which is yielded to Herbert we owe much to the great critic whose revolutionary activity appears in many directions – Coleridge.[2] But at the time of Coleridge there was still something lacking for the proper understanding of George Herbert; and that was a thorough understanding of Anglican theology in the first part of the seventeenth century. Here, again, I must hasten to add, we owe much to Coleridge, and to the prolongation and development of his curiosity through the Oxford Movement. But more time had to elapse before Herbert could be presented, not merely as the charming versifier of Jacobean and Caroline theology

and devotion, but as one of the authors whom we should study in order to understand the spirit of that theology.

"Herbert is not merely a charming poet who happened, from the circumstances of his life, to choose to write on religious subjects. From what little we know of his life, we can be pretty sure that he was deeply read in Christian theology, and not merely in that of his own time; that his poetry is completely saturated in his theology to such an extent as to make him *the* poet of Anglicanism.

"That is to put him in a class by himself. I am aware that to assert that he is, as a religious poet, superior to Donne, is to cross the border of judgment into personal opinion; is to make a claim that cannot be proved. I would not venture to put any one poem of Herbert against any one of Donne and say that it is better. It is only in reading the religious poetry of Herbert as a whole, and that of Donne as a whole, that I am left with the conviction that religious poetry was more incidental for Donne, and more essential for Herbert. The border-line between making use of religious thought and feeling in order to write poetry, and using one's poetic gifts to the glory of God, cannot be clearly defined; yet I think that Donne inclines to one side, and Herbert to the other.

"And if one compares Herbert with other religious poets in English, and with more modern ones, the peculiar quality becomes clearer and appears more marvellous. Herbert is, I think, the most intellectual of all our religious poets; which does not at all mean that he is the least ardent. His followers, Vaughan and Traherne, are poets of occasional mystical flashes rather than of a steady intellectual light. In Crashaw, and in some more modern poets who resemble Crashaw, we find a more passionate, even erotic mood, which to me is like a diversion of human emotions to divine objects.[3] And in the greatest Anglican religious poet of modern times – Christina Rossetti – we find ourselves aware often rather of the struggling human soul than of the objects of contemplation. In this difference between Herbert and Christina Rossetti there is not merely a difference of temperament or of sex; there is a difference in the age into which they were born."[4]

Mr. Eliot commented on the very peculiar way in which Herbert's personality enters into and is wholly dissolved in his poetry; and continued: "That is the baffling difference – baffling to put into words – which I feel exists between Herbert and Donne. With Donne I feel that there is always something of the particular and private sinner which remains, as a kind of sediment, even in his most religious verse. It is not, on the other hand, that

Herbert reaches the complete impersonality of the hymn. Herbert's poetry is always the expression of a particular human being; so that when we have read all his poems several times we feel that we know Herbert in a sense in which we do not know St. Thomas Aquinas or Adam of St. Victor from their hymns. His style is never liturgical. It is the language of ordinary speech, only of a classical purity and directness.

"It is by an easy conversational familiarity, even homeliness, that Herbert communicates with us as one person to another. It is always the poetry of a particular man speaking, and of a man who knows the human heart. It is also a man with a sturdy mind, who faces the facts of life: there is the austerity, as well as the humility and charity of the saint.

"If I can do nothing else, I should like to destroy the picture of George Herbert as the kindly silver-haired but rather mild and feeble country parson who might figure in one of the more sentimental tales of Dickens.[5] There was nothing of the Christmas-card parson about this learned and seasoned aristocrat of the seventeenth century. He was a tough man in a tough age. He was a man of his time, for whom sin was very real, and the promises of death very terrible. Only, as I say, he happened to be something very near a saint, and a saint, whenever he appears is always greater than his time. Indeed the only poetry that I can think of which belongs to quite the same class as Herbert – as expression of purity and intensity of religious feeling, and, as I am told by those who can appreciate Spanish literature more accurately than I, for literary excellence – is St. John of the Cross. Although, of course, both in their racial and in their personal temperaments the two men are very different.[6]

"In order to understand a great poet we should know something of his age – both in order to know what he has in common with it and to know in what he is aloof or superior to it. We need to remember that Herbert lived in an age which had very high standards of culture, and in which theology was a part of the reading of the cultivated man; an age in which religious thought and religious feelings were not only balanced as they have been at no other time in our history, but in which they interpenetrated each other. When Charles I was in prison we are told that his favourite reading was the Bible, 'Ecclesiastical Polity,'[7] Andrewes' 'Sermons' and Herbert, as well as Shakespeare and Spenser; and just before his execution he recommended the Princess Elizabeth to read Andrewes, Hooker and Laud.

"That was not an age either of arid theology or of vague piety. It was an age not only of great poetry but – what is perhaps more valuable for the

poet – an age of great prose. In this prose there were tendencies toward the ornate, the heavily elaborate, the pompous and the fantastical; it had not achieved any standard of golden mediocrity; and both prose and verse were developing a tropical luxuriance which were to need the severe pruning of Dryden. The prose of the beginning of the seventeenth century, when at its noblest and simplest, as in the Authorised Version, has something miraculous about it; its purity seems due to individual rather than to social discipline. Herbert's verse shares this quality; and is freer from the perversities for which Dr. Johnson reprehended metaphysical poetry, than is that of any of his contemporaries. He is, I think, more nearly a 'classic' poet in the French sense than is Donne.

"The terms 'personality' and 'impersonality' applied to the relation of an author to his poetry are very easily abused.[8] It is fatally easy to employ them differently in different contexts, and to fall into such imprecision that one may often contradict oneself; and I dare say that I have in the past used them as inconsistently as anybody. In such an inexact study as criticism we have to take these risks, or remain silent.

"What impresses me as the peculiar quality of Herbert's poetry is that while familiarity with it makes us feel that we have got to know a particular, unique man, we know him only in his poetry and not through his poetry. We cannot, as with Donne, read his poetry as a kind of cypher which will yield clues to a peculiarly interesting personality behind poetry. What is relevant is all there, and we do not ask to know more of him than what is conveyed in his utterance of his meditations on the highest spiritual mysteries. Within his limits, therefore, he achieves the greatest universality in his art; he remains as the human soul contemplating the divine.

"But criticisms such as these can be only marginal notes beside the text; they can have no value unless you return to that text. Unless you read a poet it is a waste of time to read about him, or to listen to somebody talking about him.

"I have only been trying to encourage anyone who will read or re-read Herbert to be prepared to regard him as a man of great intellectual gifts and great psychological insight; and to regard devotional verse like his, not as a pleasant by-path of poetry, but as the highest, if not the most comprehensive that a poet can attempt. So I prefer to end by reading another poem of Herbert's chosen for its sublimity of content and its technical mystery."

Mr. Eliot then read the poem "Whit Sunday."[9]

NOTES

1. In an earlier lecture titled "George Herbert" (1932), TSE began his own rehabilitation of the poet, admiring the "spiritual stamina" of his work. "Throughout there is brain work, and a very high level of intensity; his poetry is definitely an *oeuvre* to be studied entire. And our gradual appreciation of the poetry gives us a new impression of the man. . . . [H]is poetry expresses the slow, sometimes almost despairing and always agonizing toil of the proud and passionate man of the world towards spiritual life; a toil and agony which must always be the same, for the similar temperament, to the end of the world" (4.413-14). But in his 1935 essay "Religion and Literature," TSE still ranked Herbert as a minor poet: "I do not pretend to offer Vaughan, or Southwell, or George Herbert, or Hopkins as major poets" (5.220). By 1944, in "What Is Minor Poetry?," Herbert continued his upward climb in TSE's estimation: "I, for one, cannot admit that Herbert can be called a 'minor' poet: for it is not of a few favourite poems that I am reminded when I think of him, but of the whole work" (6.572).

2. Between 1817 and 1830, Coleridge, an avid reader of Herbert's *The Temple* (1633), was the first champion of Herbert as a poet in the nineteenth century, praising him as an "exquisite master" in *Biographia Literaria* (1817) and expressing steady admiration in his notebooks and letters, and particularly in *The Friend* (1818): "Having mentioned the name of Herbert, that model of a man, a gentleman, and a clergyman, let me add, that the quaintness of some of his thoughts, not of his diction, than which nothing can be more pure, manly, and unaffected, has blinded modern readers to the great general merit of his poems, which are for the most part exquisite in their kind." *The Friend: A Series of Essays*, vol I, new edn (London: Edward Moxon, 1863), 42.

3. TSE discusses Herbert, Vaughan, Traherne, and Crashaw together in his sixth Clark lecture, "Crashaw" (2.705) and in "Mystic and Politician as Poet" (3.95).

4. TSE discusses Herbert and Rossetti together in "George Herbert" (1932): "Of all devotional poets, certainly of all Anglican poets, George Herbert seems nearest in feeling to Christina Rossetti – who indeed, in a humble way, found herself obliged to make as great, and perhaps a greater, sacrifice of this world than did Herbert. But a certain resemblance of temperament immediately suggests also profound differences. Christina's religious verse suffers . . . from a monotony due to a narrower range of emotion and an inferior intellectual gift" (4.414).

5. In "George Herbert" (1932), TSE states that Herbert "was not the prototype of the clergyman of Dickens' Christmas at Dingley Dell" (4.412), referring to the manor farm where the Pickwickians enjoyed Christmas in *The Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club* (1837).

6. In discussing the relation of the religious vocation of Herbert and St. John to their poetry in "George Herbert" (1932), TSE writes: "I am not for a moment comparing the accomplishment of Herbert with that of the Spaniard. I am only putting forward the suggestion that it is very rare to find a poet of whom one may say, that his poetic gift would have remained dormant or unfulfilled but for his religious vocation" (4.414).

7. Richard Hooker's *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*; TSE discusses its importance to the seventeenth-century Anglican Church in "The Genesis of Philosophic Prose: Bacon and Hooker" (1929) (3.643).

8. TSE addresses the abuse of the terms "personality" and "impersonality" in "Tradition and the Individual Talent": "for my meaning is, that a poet has, not a 'personality' to express, but a

particular medium, which is only a medium and not a personality, in which impressions and experiences combine in peculiar and unexpected ways. Impressions and experiences which are important for the man may take no place in the poetry, and those which become important in the poetry may play quite a negligible part in the man, the personality" (2.110).

9. *Read*: "Whitsunday"; the report concluded with the following statement: "The Bishop thanked Mr. Eliot for his lecture and said they had been taken, in Herbert's words, 'into a land of spices: something understood'" [from "Prayer (I)"]. The report was accompanied by a photograph of TSE and the Dean of Salisbury in the Cloisters after the lecture (13; see figure 8 following page 406). A week after the lecture, TSE reported to Enid Faber that he was so tormented, "what with talking about George Herbert at Salisbury last Thursday and being introduced by the Bp. as 'Mr. Herbert': that I really can't talk sense for another week or so" (31 May 1938).

On Christianity and a Useful Life. A Speech Day address, Truro School, Cornwall[1]

The Truronian (Dec 1938) 2-9

The thought that comes to my mind is this: "Don't believe anything you're told"; to which I might add: "Don't be in a hurry to make up your mind."

We all think we observe the first of these rules – that makes us all the more gullible. We are all inclined to disagree with the advice which our elders give us: that is a healthy enough impulse, but it springs from dislike of authority, rather than from seeing that our elders are wrong – though they frequently are wrong. Sometimes our disagreement springs from a deep source, and we must obey it, though we cannot explain it; but even then, to doubt, or to disagree, imposes on us the obligation to think for ourselves. And that is why I say that the exhortation, "Don't believe everything you are told," is not easy to carry out, because it implies thinking, and that is the hardest possible work. I do not believe that anyone really likes to think: and two or three hours' real thinking is a hard day's work. But there never was a time when real scepticism – that is, not simply doubting, but stopping to think things out for oneself – was more needed than to-day.

You have all been educated as Christians, and, I hope, will all remain so. But anyone who would make the most of this life must go on developing to the end of life, and his Christianity, that is, his understanding of what Christianity is, must go on developing too; and what its truths mean for him at one stage will not be the same as what they meant ten years before, or what they will mean ten years later. You cannot just put your Christianity on a shelf for reference, like old text-books, when you go out into the world, and expect it to stay there always the same when you want to refer to it. It is people who do this, who come to think that the Christian faith was something suitable for childhood or school, but that it is too childish to be of any use in later years. People who never really grow up – and that is a good many – are better off with a childish faith than with none at all. But if you are to go on growing – and what our education should have done for us is to teach us how to go on growing by ourselves after we have finished with schools and colleges – your Christianity must grow too, and that will involve you in some pretty hard thinking. And in the present state of the

world, the Christian will find himself faced at every turn with difficult problems of conduct which other people can avoid.

It used to be said about Christians, a generation or so ago, that they were people who wanted not to think; that they swallowed comfortable and cosy dogmas which no intelligent or honest man could accept, in order to have an easy time and not worry about what was wrong with the world. There are always some Christians of whom these things can be said, just as there are a great many other people who will believe something else for the same reasons. But – and this is one thing which makes the present time very interesting and stimulating to live in – I think that to-day such a comfortable life should be less possible for Christians than for anybody else. We see various unpleasant things happening in other countries, and we say, "That couldn't happen in England." Now, of course, nothing happens in quite the same way in any two countries, because of racial and national differences. We cannot ever be sure just how deep these differences go: but I still believe that on the whole English people are tolerant and dislike cruelty. But what is the common feature of all the political systems that we dislike? It is surely the discouragement of individual thinking, and the elevation to the status of permanent unchangeable dogma of assumptions which to the Christian thinker are obviously partial and relative truths. And all their drilling and systematisation creates a pleasant environment just for the people who are happy to get rid of the responsibility of doing any thinking for themselves. And it is precisely the Christian, who has higher and more exacting standards of truth, who remains the sceptical critic and, therefore, the opponent, and who has to undertake that hard labour of thinking.

This brings me back to the exhortation: "Don't be in a hurry to make up your minds." I consider myself fortunate in having had my period of school and university at a time when there were no strong mass-movements in political and social directions. Any feelings of collective pugnacity were relieved on or round the edge of the football field. It was, therefore, easy to explore different kinds of thought, to expose oneself to the influence of one author after another, and to keep one's mind more or less open. I am not, of course, here attacking or defending any particular philosophy. I am only saying that the danger to-day is for people to accept some philosophy before they understand it, and then to stop thinking altogether. It is easier to get into a crowd than to get out of it. And the man who accepts any philosophy just because it seems to be the most "advanced" at the

moment, and ceases to use his critical intelligence on it, becomes mentally stunted. And unless you go on thinking about your Christianity – and your Christianity is relevant to every problem you will have to face – then it will not be the Christianity of a grown man.

I want to say something about the life of a particular man – a man of whom probably none of you have heard. The question to be illustrated is that of the relation between "career" and life. A "career" is important, but it is only the outside aspect of a right life. There have been many careers – successful and useful – in which the man himself appears to be merely a kind of machine for performing a particular work, without knowing what he is doing and without being very different at the end from the beginning. And there have been many remarkable lives so haphazard and disorderly, from an ordinary social point of view, that we cannot say that the man has had any career at all. Of course, it is in general a good thing to start life with such definite abilities and tastes that your career in life is pretty clearly marked out: if you are like that, what you have to be on guard against is the danger of your life being merely a career, and not the development and improvement of a human mind and soul. But many of us are not like that, and we do not find out exactly what our job is except through many attempts and failures. Or we may be impelled to give up something that we do very well, for something else which worldly wisdom is against. And it is only after a man's life is over that either the word "success" or the word "failure" can be used, if at all. For it is only then we can perceive the peculiar pattern of circumstance, of his own design, or his struggles with himself, or his submission to Divine guidance.

Charles de Foucauld was a Frenchman who was born eighty years ago, and who was killed by Moorish brigands in 1916. So he lived recently enough for me to know men who knew him, although I never met him myself. He started life with conventional advantages: he belonged to a noble old family, he had social advantages and enough money. The career marked out for him by his position was the Army, so he was sent to St. Cyr, the great military school, and thence to the cavalry college. That was the equivalent to becoming a lieutenant in a Guards regiment. He showed great ability in his studies, but wasted his time as a young man with money, charm and social position can waste it, and was dismissed from his regiment. It looked as if he would be nothing but an ordinary waster who would become only an unpleasant old man. But an insurrection in Algeria prompted him to re-enlist, and in action against Moorish rebels he showed

himself shrewd, brave and a good leader of men. This was what might have been expected of him: what was surprising was what happened after this bit of border warfare was over. The Army did not particularly want him, but the desert had done something to him, something to elicit the real man underneath whose existence no one suspected. Against the wishes of his family, he settled down in Algiers and applied himself to the study of Arabic and Hebrew. For his intention was to explore the unknown and dangerous territory at the back of Algeria, nominally a French colony, but actually a land into which no European had ever dared to penetrate.

The next period of his life was one of most daring adventures. He was advised that if he disguised himself for his travels as an Arab, he might at some point give himself away. So he pretended to be a Jewish merchant, for such wandering Jewish traffickers were tolerated by the Arabs and Moors, although treated rather badly. Even in this role he could not openly take observations, or even make notes. He says of himself at this period:

> My instruments were: a compass, a watch and a pocket barometer . . . a sextant, a chronometer and a false horizon for observations of longitudes and latitudes; two holosteric barometers . . . and maximum and minimum thermometers, for meteorological observations. . . . My route was mapped out with the compass and barometer. On the tramp, I always had a notebook 2 inches square hidden in my left hand; and a pencil less than an inch long, never out of the other hand . . . Thus I was writing almost all the time I was on the road . . . Even in the most numerous caravan, no one ever perceived it; I took care to walk in front of or behind my companions, in order that the amplitude of my garments might prevent them from seeing the slight movement of my hands. The contempt felt for the Jews favoured my isolation.[2]

This was not merely an adventure. When he got back he was able to make a report for which the Geographic Society gave him its gold medal, and which was the basis for all subsequent French exploration and pacification of that wild country.

So far, Charles de Foucauld has turned a useless and wasted life into one of usefulness, and proved himself possessed of great qualities. He might, from then on, have accomplished a great career: what came to him was a vocation. The life in the desert, with its solitude, its perpetual danger and its removal from distractions, had brought to consciousness the Christian in him – which is, I believe, in all of us. He was not a man for half measures.

He had achieved success, but he was ready to drop it. He returned to France and gave himself to religious study, with a view to becoming a member of one of the most austere of religious orders. From that point, for several years he is finding his way, now at one monastery, now at another; part of the time as a kind of hermit, as Brother Charles, leading an almost destitute life near Nazareth and Jerusalem. His real vocation was for a more active life, rather than that of a monastery, and he ended as a missionary in the country of his first explorations.

So Father Charles, as he now was, became a missionary of a peculiar sort. His first care, in the remote outpost in which he settled, was for the French soldiers who came his way; his second, for the native people, whom he loved and understood. To make converts was not his first aim, though many converts did come. The Tuareg and Bedouin are a deeply religious people, and he knew that they would recognise sincerity of faith, and that they would be more influenced by the spectacle of a devout life, wholly given to the service of God and man, than by attempts to alter their beliefs.[3] Foucauld rather stressed the common faith in God, than the differences in belief: and he was always ready to help the destitute, the sick and diseased, and to labour for the improvement of the condition of a very poor people, for their general enlightenment and for the enfranchisement of slaves. And I know of no life in which there was more complete harmony between devotion to God and the highest patriotism. In any colony of any nation, the curse is always the unscrupulous money-makers and the dissolute adventurers who come from the ruling country: people who prey upon the natives, or whose morality is lower than that of the natives whom they look down upon, or whose religion is non-existent. Foucauld was one of those rare men who increase the prestige of their country and their civilisation among subject peoples. His reputation was such that he was held in reverence as a holy man by tribesmen stubbornly opposed to Christianity.

So he went on until 1916. When the Great War came, it was naturally the occasion for sedition among subject tribes and for raiding activity among those unsubdued. In his lonely outpost Foucauld was constantly in danger, in spite of the respect in which he was held by the natives who knew him. In his last letter in December, 1916, he wrote a quotation from St. John of the Cross: "To suffer and to love is the greatest thing that can be done in this world."[4] A few days later, when there happened to be none of the friendly tribesmen about, a band of Senussi arrived at the little oasis where he was alone. He was taken prisoner, and shot by a guard almost by accident.

The lives of great Christian men and women have been so varied, that I would not isolate any one of them to hold up as a general example. I have only chosen one life of a man who started out with every advantage for a conventional career, who made a mess of it, who then suddenly achieved great distinction as an explorer, who as suddenly abandoned that activity for another, and who ended as almost a saint. I have taken it as only one example of those lives – and they can be infinitely varied – in which, under guidance which we can only clearly observe in retrospect, the two ideals of social usefulness and personal spiritual development have been realised together. We cannot settle our own lives in advance, according to a pattern, any more than Foucauld did. We can only hope that if the occasion ever does come, we shall be able to take the greatest risks, or make the greatest sacrifices, for the right things and the right reasons, by trying to learn what it means to dare to be alone with God, to question the assumptions on which we see people about us living, and to go on thinking by ourselves and not as members of a crowd.

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. As printed in *The Truronian* (Dec 1938), 2-9, the school magazine of the Truro School in Truro, Cornwall, following TSE's Speech Day address and distribution of prizes at the Methodist Boys School on 3 June 1938. Instructed by the governors of the school, the Rev. H. B. Workman of the Methodist Education Committee in London extended the invitation on 27 Oct 1937; having never visited Cornwall, TSE accepted on 2 Nov. After the event, the headmaster, E. H. Magson, wrote to TSE on 16 June 1938 that "the Senior boys have asked whether it would be possible to have the manuscript of your Speech so that it may be printed in the School Magazine. The Press report was very inadequate, and they would like to study it again at leisure. . . . We had a great time on Speech Day, and it may interest you to know that your remarks on the need for continuous development in religious thought and belief were made the basis of the next sermon in the School Chapel, by our Second Master." A photograph of TSE giving his speech was printed in the July issue, with the headmaster and Colonel G. E. Stanley Smith, chairman of the school governors, seated next to him (see figure 9 following page 406).

2. TSE draws upon and quotes from the biography by René Bazin, *Charles de Foucauld, explorateur du Maroc, ermite au Sahara* (1921), translated into English by Peter Keelan as *Charles de Foucauld: Hermit and Explorer* (London: Burns, Oates & Washbourne, 1931); here 35-36; TSE's mistranscriptions and paraphrased phrases have been corrected to Keelan. TSE had written to Jeanette McPherrin on 30 May 1935: "A great deal of fuss is being made now over Lawrence of Arabia; but if you could get hold of the *Vie de Charles de Foucauld* . . . you would learn something about a much greater man in the same genre." He was beatified by Pope Benedict XVI in Nov 2005.

3. The Tuareg Berber and closely tied Bedouin Arab peoples are nomadic, Islamic tribes inhabiting the Saharan part of southeastern Algeria and other countries of the middle and western Sahara. Foucauld, who lived among the Tuareg, was killed by a Senussi Bedouin bandit during the uprising of Dec 1916.

4. Foucauld wrote to his cousin Marie de Bondy on 1 Dec 1916, the day of his death: "When we are able to suffer and to love, we can do much. . . . We feel that we are suffering; we do not always feel that we love, and that is one more source of great suffering. But we do know that we want to love, and to want to love is to love. We find that we do not love enough. We shall never love enough . . ." The letter is quoted in full in Jean-Jacques Antier, *Charles de Foucauld*, trans. Julia Shirek Smith (San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 1999), 141.

How to Read Poetry. A Prize Day address, West Cornwall School for Girls, Penzance

On the afternoon of 3 June 1938, after giving the Prize Day address at the Truro Methodist Boys School that morning (5.623), TSE was the principal speaker at the West Cornwall prize-giving in St. John's Hall, Penzance. The invitation to add Penzance to his Truro visit had come before 15 Mar, when he wrote to the Rev. H. B. Workman of the Methodist Education Committee that he was "still terrified to think of inventing two distinct speeches for one day, boys in the morning and girls in the afternoon." The proceedings and a summary with quotations from TSE's address were reported as "Welcome to Famous Poet" in the Penzance *Evening Tidings* of 3 June (3). The headmistress, E. H. Killip, said that "the platform had borne in the past the weight of men distinguished in many walks of life, but never before that of a great poet – the poet of the generation – whose verse the most eloquently, and for many the most faithfully, portrays the complexity and the disillusionment of their present baffled and war-weary world." Describing the work of the School, she announced that "a paper on the poems of T. S. Eliot by Miss Gadd was followed by a great demand for borrowed copies of that writer's work." TSE was thanked on the motion of Rev. F. H. Pritchard, chairman of the Cornwall Methodist District.

You may know that I have been talking at Truro this morning: for which reason I wish to remark first that I am now going to talk about something quite different. That is not because I draw any distinction of subject matter or of manner, in addressing a different audience. It is simply that both occasions seem to me too important, to say the same thing twice – and on such an occasion, a talk may go sour quicker than milk on a hot day. So this afternoon I propose to talk about the one subject which I am generally supposed to know something about: I want to say something about "how to read poetry." There may be some of you who don't like to read poetry: indeed, I sometimes incline to believe that poetry is something which everybody writes, and nobody reads. But even to those who neither read nor write it, I hope I may have a few ideas to offer: only they will have to listen very attentively to find out what they are.

If you have begun by listening attentively, you will have noticed that I have already said: "how to read poetry," and not "what to read." These are two quite different things, and they correspond to two important aspects

of education: the outer and the inner. Or, to what is done to you, and what you do to yourselves. In our classes in English literature certain texts are prescribed for us which we have to read. This is very necessary, but I think we often feel, say about a particular play of Shakespeare or poem of Milton, that we might have enjoyed it if we had not been obliged to study it. The poems which we study in this way have to be selected from among the greatest classics, and yet just for that reason may be those which need the most knowledge and experience before we can really appreciate them. How to enjoy poetry is not what we learn primarily in classes: what we learn there is how to understand a poem as occupying a particular place in the history of English (or some other) literature, and how to understand it in relation to the time and environment in which it was written. On the side on which it can be studied formally, poetry, and all literature, is a part of history; and we need to study it for the same reasons for which we study history.

But for the enjoyment of poetry you have to start, so to speak, from yourself: and as we are no two of us quite alike, there is no programme of reading which can be laid down for any two people. You will never get very far, of course, in enjoying poetry if you only read what you have to read for examinations; and you have to begin by reading it simply because you do enjoy it, and without any thought of its doing you any good or being of any practical use. At the beginning, the important thing is to enjoy something, and it is better to read bad poetry and enjoy it, than to read good poetry and not be moved. For the first and most important criterion that you need to discover in reading, is to know when you are excited and when you are bored.

What I was not told at school, in studying English literature, is this: that I could not expect to get the full enjoyment of some of the greatest authors for a good many years to come. I will admit that Shakespeare did not mean very much to me until I was over thirty, and Milton not until a good deal later still – but that is not saying that we ought to wait until we are quite ripe for them, before we read such poets at all. For with the greatest poets, we may say that in a sense we are never quite ripe. Whenever I take up one of these poets – Shakespeare or Milton or Dante – I feel that I am tackling something new. Because, as I get older, I think that the further experience of life that I get helps me to see more in these writers than I was able to see before. I hope, in ten years' time, to understand the plays of Shakespeare a good deal better than I do now, and certainly do not expect to reach a

point in this life at which there is nothing more to learn from them. I would not be putting the matter quite accurately to say that I get more enjoyment, but it is certain that the kind of enjoyment these poets now give me is different, and more interesting, than what they gave me ten or twenty years ago. It is true of course not only of poets, but of all the greatest books, that in the course of re-reading them we are in the process of growing up to them. And however long we live, there will always be something more in them, to correspond to the needs of our greater maturity and wisdom. No one could expect ever quite to grow up to a complete understanding of the Gospels!

Now on the one hand, it is necessary to begin to read the greatest authors before we understand them – otherwise we should never begin at all – and on the other hand it is necessary to be reading other authors who are not too big for us. I remember very clearly my amazement, at about fourteen, in finding for myself poetry that I was really excited over.[1] There was a great deal just in that: in the fact of picking up some book which nobody had ever told one to read, a book about which one knew nothing, and nothing about the author. Nothing that I read in school, nothing that my family advised or exhorted me to read (for they concerned themselves about my reading, and I remember my mother's anxiety because I devoted too much attention to the novels of Mayne Reid – she tried to induce me to read Macaulay's *History* instead):[2] nothing that was recommended to me served the purpose of what I found for myself. Byron and Shelley, Omar Khayyam, Rossetti, Swinburne – and smaller men too, like Ernest Dowson:[3] I seemed to get suddenly a personal intimacy with these poets whom I read for myself; and perhaps the feeling that some of them would not be approved by my elders added to the pleasure.

That kind of pleasure comes only once, and it is right that it should; because it is true of reading as of life, that you must not expect any great experience ever to repeat itself identically. We are constantly changing, we should constantly be developing, and we must welcome the experiences suitable to our present stage, and not desire to repeat those of some years before. And this first kind of pleasure in reading, is what it is largely just because we have to begin with read so little. What matters at that stage, is not whether the poets we read are great poets; what matters is a personal relationship with them. And still I find, that there remain certain minor poets who are, so to speak, old and intimate friends, and who mean more to me, I dare say, than they do to anyone else. For in our books, as in our

acquaintance with people, our lives would be very much poorer if we only knew the great and distinguished. And we do not make these friendships only early in life; there is always the chance of suddenly finding some new minor author who will have a great personal importance for us.

Now just as our lives are narrow and our understanding and sympathy limited, if we go through life only knowing the kind of people whom we found congenial at the beginning, so it is with books. After the first experience of delight, we go looking for new authors who will be just as close friends; and in the process we are changing, ourselves – just as all the friendships we make with people have their effect on us, and we too affect our friends. But whereas in personal friendships we are limited to people who live at the same time as ourselves – though I may tell you that one of the pleasures of middle age is being able to have friends much older and also friends much younger than yourself – there is one great advantage of books: that we can choose our friends both among contemporaries and among people who have been dead for centuries. To understand past ages – history, and literature as a part of history – there is a great deal that we have to do by systematic study and under direction: that is the outer side of education. But we don't really understand past literature except as we enjoy it, make friends with it; only then do we understand how different these people were, and also how like ourselves.

It is frequently assumed, I fear, that past literature is what we read for education, and contemporary literature for enjoyment: but you can't draw such lines. Unless contemporary literature helps to educate you, and unless past literature is enjoyed, neither is being a really good friend to you. The person who chooses among books all his friends, from one period of history, is missing a great deal of life; and that is especially true when all the books chosen are contemporary. One has preferences in one's intimate friends, but it is more interesting if they do not all belong to the same small group; and one likes, furthermore, to be able to know how to behave in any company in which one may find oneself. What is the chief use of travel? It is not merely to see beautiful things; it is to get out of one's own country, and by getting some understanding of other nations, their temperament and civilisation, be able to understand our own better and more objectively. You want to understand your own time, also: and one very necessary means to do this is sometimes to get outside your own time. You cannot understand, or even fully enjoy, contemporary literature unless you learn to feel at ease with the literature of other periods. And what I have been saying

about excursions in time applies also, of course, to excursions into foreign literatures. To understand and enjoy fully, English literature, it is desirable to know as much as one has time to learn of at least one foreign literature.

You notice that I have been talking of the reading of literature in terms of personal friendships: this is more than an analogy used to make a point clearer. What I have had in mind all the time is this: that education in the enjoyment of literature is not only similar to, but inseparable from, education in living. I know that my reading has helped me to understand human beings better, and that my experience of human beings has helped me to a deeper understanding of what I read. And the relationship between literature and life is like that between work and leisure. In our best reading – when we are reading some work of literary art, at a moment when our mind and sensibility are most wide awake – we cannot separate enjoyment and benefit: they are one thing. Practically, of course, we have to do a great deal of reading which is pure grind; and on the other hand when I read a detective story I don't pretend that it is doing me good. And in life our keenest moments are mostly those in which we are doing something supremely well, even if it is very hard work. That is as true of the tennis champion at Wimbledon under a broiling sun, as of a poet at his typewriter, or a painter at his easel. Though if you stopped any of these people to ask whether he was enjoying himself, he would probably be annoyed with you.

I mean more than this, however. While leading a good or noble active life, full of experience, will not in itself help to develop your enjoyment of poetry, and while reading poetry is no substitute for living, yet each activity will help the other to develop itself. The person who profits from reading poetry is not necessarily a person who has made either a hobby or a profession of knowing everything about it. It is rather the person who has got the most out of what he has read, who has brought his understanding of life to the understanding of his reading, and who has turned his reading to account for the understanding of life.

NOTES

1. TSE wrote in the introduction to his Norton lectures, "I can recall clearly enough the moment when, at the age of fourteen or so, I happened to pick up a copy of FitzGerald's *Omar* [*The Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám*] which was lying about, and the almost overwhelming introduction to a new world of feeling which this poem was the occasion of giving me. It was like a sudden conversion; the world appeared anew, painted with bright, delicious and painful colours" (4.591-92). In his fifth Norton lecture, however, TSE declared that "I can still enjoy FitzGerald's *Omar*, though I do not hold that rather smart and shallow view of life" (4.643).

2. Thomas Mayne Reid (1818-83), a Scots-Irish writer, emigrated to America in 1840 and wrote over seventy popular adventure novels, including *The Boy Hunters* (1853), *The White Chief* (1853), *The Quadroon* (1856), and *The Headless Horseman* (1865). TSE's juvenile fiction – "The Birds of Prey," "A Tale of a Whale," and "The Man Who Was King" (1.3, 1.4, 1.6) – were written in the vein of Reid's adventure stories. Thomas Babington Macaulay's *The History of England* appeared in five volumes (1849-61) and covers the period 1685 to 1702, from the accession of James II to the death of William III.

3. After reading FitzGerald's *Omar* at fourteen, wrote TSE, "I took the usual adolescent course with Byron, Shelley, Keats, Rossetti, Swinburne" (4.592). "It is difficult to return critically to a poet whose poetry was . . . the first boyhood enthusiasm," TSE wrote in "Byron," "and a return, after many years, to the poetry of Byron is accompanied by a similar gloom: images come before the mind, and the recollection of some verses in the manner of *Don Juan*, tinged with that disillusion and cynicism only possible at the age of sixteen" (5.430). "The ideas of Shelley seem to me always to be ideas of adolescence. . . . And an enthusiasm for Shelley seems to me also to be an affair of adolescence: for most of us, Shelley has marked an intense period before maturity, but for how many does Shelley remain the companion of age?" (4.642).

"The mind of a boy of fourteen may be deadened by Shakespeare," TSE wrote in "The Education of Taste," "and may burst into life on collision with Omar or [Rossetti's] the Blessed Damozel" (2.63), praise that he qualified with his comment in "Dante": "And little things put one off: Rossetti's 'Blessed Damozel,' first by my rapture and next by my revolt, held up my appreciation of Beatrice by many years" (3.371-72). TSE wrote in "Swinburne as Poet": "agreed that we do not . . . greatly enjoy Swinburne, and agreed (a more serious condemnation) at one period of our lives we did enjoy him and now no longer enjoy him" (2.181).

TEXTUAL NOTE

1. The seven-page typescript, with TSE's holograph emendations, is in the Hayward Bequest (H1a), King's College. Titled in pencil by TSE: "Prize-Day Address at the Methodist Girls' School at Penzance – sometime in the 30s. T.S.E."

Memorandum for the Archbishops' Commission on Training for the Ministry

In May 1936 the Anglican Convocations passed resolutions requesting the Archbishops to appoint a Commission "to consider the problems connected with the selection, testing and training, both before and after Ordination to the Diaconate, of those who are being called to serve in the sacred Ministry of the Church." On 16 May 1938 the Secretary of the Commission, L. Eaton Smith wrote TSE that the Commission "would be greatly obliged if you could see your way to submitting a Memorandum, giving your views with regard to the general matter of the Commission's reference, and more particularly what you think the laity hope to find in a minister of the Church of England, and how the laity think those ministers might best be selected in order to realise these expectations." TSE submitted his remarks to the Secretary on 3 Aug 1938 for the Commission's Sept meetings at Oxford, "with apologies for their poverty. Also I realise that they are not very well written, but I did not have enough confidence in their value to feel impelled to put them into better form; and I understand that they are solely for the confidential use of the members of the Commission. In any case, there are remarks which I would not wish to be publicly quoted in their present form."

As I do not feel qualified to hazard proposals within the terms of reference in the narrower sense, I feel that the most useful remarks that I can offer must be concerned with problems which may appear peripheral, but which are, I believe, fundamental. If the following is a contribution at all, it contributes rather to lighting the background against which discussions are conducted.

It is obvious that the Training of the Ministry is not a simple champ clos of specialised education.[1] The training of the ministry is a problem of quite another order than the training of engineers, chemists and other technicians. Such an assertion is so obviously true that its implications can easily be overlooked. If, I suggest, one is taking a long view, and not merely considering minor reforms and adaptations for the situation of the moment, then it is impossible to form a really sound theory of the training of the ministry, without having a theory of Education in general. A theory of Education, again, depends upon having a view of the nature of the Good Society, as well as an accurate understanding of the present state of society, and this brings us back to theology. A critique of modern education must

be a critique of liberalism and secularism, two doctrines to which the most powerful forces in education for over a century have been committed.[2†]

To pass from these very general observations to something more particular, I suggest that any thinking about the Training of the Ministry must take into account the social changes actually taking place in our society. Has not some of the strength – as well, of course, as some of the weakness – of the Anglican Priesthood in the past been due to its having been drawn from a fairly homogeneous upper middle class, dominated by the traditions of Oxford and Cambridge? I do not need to dwell upon the social changes which have been taking place, so far as they affect the personnel of the clergy, their social position etc., because the members of the Commission will have a much more exact knowledge of these matters than I: I only wish to stress their importance in connexion with the Commission's deliberations.

A Roman priest of my acquaintance admitted to me that he felt considerable anxiety about the future of his priesthood in this country, because the type of family which formerly was glad to give one son to the priesthood is now much smaller, and parents are disposed to discourage a son – especially of course an only son – from this vocation. He feared the consequences of the priesthood being drawn chiefly from the lower classes which still have more numerous offspring. This particular difficulty may not be so acute with us, naturally; but there appear to be reasons for believing that the larger part of the Anglican clergy may tend to come from homes with no social advantages. Unless, therefore, the general background of education is considered, it will not be enough merely to make sure that recruits of this type have a thorough theological training for the next few years after they have discovered their vocation. I am not, of course, suggesting that such recruits may not be individually of the highest quality: only that their background of general education is a question of the first importance.

It would seem that, as far ahead as we can see, the higher ranks of the clergy must continue to be filled by men who have had the best educational advantages. When I say "higher ranks" I do not mean only the higher orders of ecclesiastical preferment, but also the ranks of scholarship – the order who do the theological thinking. It would be deplorable if anything in the nature of "class consciousness" and "class hatred" should come to light among the clergy. I would only point out what seems to me one limitation

of the man of secondary State education: that his mind is inclined to be narrow and rigid, that it will receive its stamp from the particular seminary in which he has been trained for the priesthood, and that only very exceptional men will be able to acquire later in life the broadening which they failed to receive at the formative time. It is perhaps among such men that we may expect to find the most bigoted extremists – of all kinds: not perhaps the leaders of intransigence, but the rank and file.

I have the warmest admiration for the work of the communities at Kelham and Mirfield;[3] and I hope I shall give no offence if I say that I should think it unfortunate if it came to pass that these communities were recruited wholly from their own seminaries, and ceased to have the leadership of men of university education.

As for the teaching in theological colleges, I have not a wide enough acquaintance with these institutions to be qualified to criticise or make recommendations; but I suspect that more attention might profitably be paid to the history of Anglican theology, with a careful study of texts. Some priests seem to me to have an inadequate grasp of the tradition of Anglican theology from the sixteenth century on. They may thus be confined within the limits of nineteenth-century theology, or perhaps plunge into a scholasticism for which they are not properly prepared.

There is a final consideration which I should like to submit, not in the hope that I can put the seriousness of the issue better than others, but in the fear that otherwise it may not be put at all: that is the problem, vital for the country and vital for the Church, of the rural community. It is a commonplace that the most zealous young priests have preferred to devote themselves to the more depressed urban areas, and have avoided the country village. One has both sympathy and respect for this choice. But in general, I cannot help thinking of this tendency as a function of the universal and alarming urbanisation of mind of the English people. The situation is deplorable, and of course is not one that can be dealt with by the Church alone; but it is one to which the attention of all within the Church should be called. Apart from what the Church can do in educating people towards more normal standards of living, it has a very important problem in the preservation of what is left of rural parish life. It must be a very rare townsman who can transplant himself sufficiently into a rural parish to acquire the knowledge and understanding necessary for him to become a leader of his community. Would it be possible to consider specialising the work of at

least one training college as a centre for the education of priests who are ready to devote themselves to this most important and difficult task of the country parish?

I do not know what may be considered the average degree of intelligence, piety and enlightenment on the part of the holders of rural advowsons.[4]

NOTES

1. *champ clos*: lit. "closed field"; a jousting pitch or field staked out for tournaments

2†. This sentence followed, struck out by hand in the typescript: "An examination of the words and the practice of educators for several generations does not lead one to believe that the majority of such leaders have had any but the flimsiest theories, that their theories have been based on anything better than un-criticised assumptions, or that they have known what they were doing or why."

3. The Kelham Theological College, run by the Society of the Sacred Mission in Kelham, Nottinghamshire, and the Mirfield Monastery, run by the Community of the Resurrection in Mirfield, West Yorkshire, were training colleges for future Anglo-Catholic priests who could not afford a university education; TSE befriended both communities and occasionally visited them as places of spiritual retreat in the 1930s.

4. advowson (OED): "The right to present a member of the clergy to a particular benefice or living. Also occas. more generally: guardianship, protection, or patronage of a church or religious house."

A Commentary

The Criterion: A Literary Review, 17 (July 1938) 686-92

A column in *The Times* brought to my notice a *Report on the British Press* published by P.E.P. (Political and Economic Planning) and sold at the price of half a guinea.[1] Attracted by the cheerful American-sounding title of this organization, and wondering who would pay half a guinea for a report on the British Press, I bought a copy in order to find out. I learnt that P E P (it is printed without the stops) is "an independent, voluntary, non-party group and is not run for profit": it is agreeable to hear of a *group* that is not run for profit. P E P consists of "more than a hundred working members, and through its broadsheet, *Planning*, is in touch with many more hundreds of people actively interested in promoting national reconstruction through an objective fact-finding approach to current social and economic problems."[2]

So far as one can judge from this volume and the enclosed leaflet, the more than a hundred working members choose to remain unknown to the public: not even the name of the Secretary is given. The "Report" is a document of quite unexceptionable propriety, and far from being sensational, tends to suffer from the dullness that frequently creeps into reports for which a number of persons are jointly responsible. But although nothing in the Report is put in such a way as to disturb those who do not wish to be disturbed, there is some interesting data, and some information of value to those who are already worried about the future of the Press. And there is an occasional phrase or paragraph that reads as if it had been written by an intelligent man in a sardonic mood, who was taking an interest in what he was writing.

The Report is of use even beyond its information and its suggestions, by stimulating the mind to other questions with which it does not deal. I am more alarmed, than reassured, by being told the (to me) surprising fact that only 5 per cent. of the world's annual output of timber is pulped for paper. By "output" I presume is meant the timber cut. When one thinks of the vast quantity of pulp that is converted daily into newspapers, in this country alone, and then remembers that this is only 5 per cent. of the timber being used, one wonders whether the most extensive afforestation could

keep pace with the destruction. And, apart from all the other effects of removal of forests, which we are beginning to recognize, there is one possible effect, in this context, that seems to me very likely. The first people to suffer from scarcity of paper will be those who consume the least: that is, the producers of periodicals of small circulation.[3] (I am not concerning myself here with the effect on the publication of books.) The last people to suffer will be the producers of papers *à gros tirage*.[4] A small business has to buy paper; a colossal business can buy forests. I remember reading some time ago a paragraph of which I did not keep the reference: it concerned the shortage of paper in Germany. It stated that in order to conserve paper supplies a number of unessential periodicals were to be closed down. But the papers with large circulations were to be kept going – they were politically necessary.

The Report of P E P has little to say about the periodicals of small circulation: it is concerned almost exclusively with the great dailies and Sunday newspapers. It does mention two or three times *The Spectator* and *The New Statesman*, but does not discuss the present position or the future of such papers. But when I enumerate the periodicals that I read regularly, and the opinions of which I take seriously, I find that with the exception of *The Times* they are all periodicals of, I imagine, considerably smaller circulation than either *The Spectator* or *The New Statesman*. About the circulation and the circumstances of one or two of them I know something, and what I read in the Report of P E P does not reassure me about their future. And I do not mean periodicals of wholly special interests, but periodicals that should be of interest to every intelligent person who cares about politics, society, or the arts. Yet the *Report on the British Press* omits any account of that part of the British Press which to me is the most valuable.

The Report of P E P makes light (I think, justly enough) of the belief that the political power of the proprietors or editor of a paper increases in proportion to its circulation. It would seem that what the Report calls a "class" paper like *The Times*, which has a relatively small circulation, exercises more influence than the papers which approach the maximum – and the *possible* maximum the Report puts at about 3,000,000.[5] This is partly because a paper which aims at a large circulation, must appeal to readers below the level of intelligence which can be "influenced" at all. "The exploitation of entertainment value," says the Report, "required to build up a mass circulation prevents such papers from influencing the political views of their readers to anything like the extent of the 'class' dailies and weeklies"

[179]. This superficially encouraging statement suggests two very depressing inferences. That an editor, or a single proprietor, should wish to influence the opinions of his readers is natural and proper: that a paper, supposedly conveying political news and political opinion, should be run primarily for the sake of paying dividends to shareholders is barbarous. The French Press, whatever we may think of it, is at least run primarily for the sake of influencing opinion, and not for profit – and is, in this aspect, more civilized. And the second inference is this. It seems doubtful whether a daily or Sunday newspaper, even if it merely *takes the place* of a paper of political opinion, is wholly without influence upon the political behaviour of its readers. It helps, surely, to affirm them as a complacent, prejudiced and unthinking mass, suggestible to head-lines and photographs, ready to be inflamed to enthusiasm or soothed to passivity, perhaps more easily bamboozled than any previous generation upon earth. Their minds cannot be influenced, if they have none: but their behaviour can be directed.

There is another element in the contemporary Press, besides that of the small periodicals to which I have alluded, which is not included in the survey of P E P. We have observed the rise of periodicals of more than one sort, which give, or suggest that they are giving, the *low-down* or inside information about public events and public personalities. Though the appeal may be merely that of the excitement of being given a tip or told a secret, it may indicate the growth, at least among the metropolitan public, of a belief – right or wrong – that they are not getting all the news; a belief – right or wrong – that although they are not told falsehoods, a good deal of the truth is suppressed. The Report of P E P does complain of the frequent inadequacy of foreign news, and points especially to the lack of enough news of affairs in the United States. Its remarks seem quite just, but we should add, that a mere increase of the number of columns devoted to affairs abroad will not help much, if the news therein is always selected and presented in such a way as to justify a particular policy at home. What we need in the Press is not merely more foreign news, but presentation of foreign opinion, and unbiassed explanation of how the foreigner comes to hold this opinion. (This point was made very forcibly by Miss Jane Soames, in her book *The English Press*, which on its publication was discussed in this Commentary).[6] Such "news" might not increase our complacency, and might not be profitable to a paper the first purpose of which was to pay good dividends: but it might, in the long run, improve our relations with other countries. I suggest that any increased distrust of the amount of

information in the Press, on such matters as foreign affairs or finance, would lead to the development of numerous hole-and-corner papers (I do not use the term invidiously)[7] which would seek to satisfy the craving: but such papers would have only a restricted and centralized circulation.

The Report deals in an interesting, though of course guarded way, with the question of the influence of advertising on the Press; and with other matters that I cannot take up. The problems of the Law of Libel and of Government restrictions on the Press would provide matter for a whole Commentary.[8] The suggestion of "Co-operative" newspapers should be taken up by someone more competent to deal with it than myself.[9] I can quote with qualified approval the restrained remarks about Criticism (of art, music, literature and drama – but with greatest relevance to literature), only regretting that the unknown author did not let himself go a little further:

> In the "class" newspapers, the critics, or at any rate those who cover art, music, literature and drama, are men and women in the front rank of their respective subjects. There are, however, few front-rank critics who have not other, and often conflicting interests. [294]

This testimonial to the critics of the "class" newspapers is of course too comprehensive. What can be said is that there are still, amongst the writers of criticism, a few of the right *kind* – that is to say, critics who take criticism seriously and do nothing else – though they may not all be very good of their kind.

> Moreover, when so many novelists and publishers also review novels, the special function of true criticisms may easily become obliterated, and such reviews may occasionally descend to mutual logrolling. [294]

The expression may not be the most graceful, but the meaning seems clear.

> Special difficulties inevitably attach to the handling by popular newspapers of subjects which demand for their true appreciation a degree of education or culture which may not be present in the general body of readers. [295]

Such subjects, we might add, include those of almost all books of literary merit; and the difficulties are observable not only in what the Report calls "popular" newspapers but in those which it calls "class" newspapers. And here again, we find an argument in favour of the small periodical. I question

whether, in these days, the highest level of criticism can be hoped for in periodicals of more than a very small circulation. Beyond a point, the deterioration is first apparent by the inclusion of books not worth reviewing; later, in the quality of the reviews themselves. I am speaking, of course, not of the highest level of the best reviewer, but of the general standard of a periodical. And I doubt whether a high standard can be expected from any paper to which the popularity of its reviews is of commercial importance. So far as culture depends upon periodicals, it depends upon periodicals which exist as a means of communication between cultivated people, and not as commercial enterprise: it depends upon periodicals which do not make a profit.

As a rough guess, I should say that the small periodical ought (if things were as they should be) to have a circulation of from two to five thousand purchasers – of whom the majority should be subscribers: the maximum of five thousand being for independent weeklies of political and social, as well as literary and artistic interest, and the lower figures for periodicals appearing less frequently. They could thus, under present conditions, pay their way. They could also pay their staff and their contributors: for although there is something to be said for not paying, or for under-paying contributors, in that this gives some assurance that the writer really has something that he wants to say, no editor with the means to make payment could justifiably withhold it. And, on the assumption that the subscription lists overlapped, and that every intelligent reader wanted several such periodicals regularly, there should be room in this island for all the small periodicals that we have talent enough to produce: not a very large number, after all. I am aware that these notions are Utopian.

But, as the need for these unprofitable periodicals of limited circulation increases – and the Report of P E P, though not concerned with such papers, gives us enough reason for believing that we need them – so the difficulties of their production and circulation increase. Independent opinion finds greater and greater obstacles to expression. We assume that we have "freedom" of the Press so long as we have violent differences of opinion finding their way into print; so long as a silly official policy on any matter can be attacked by an opposition with a policy still sillier. This is the freedom of two mobs. It is a higher degree of freedom when thoughtful and independent individuals have the opportunity of addressing each other. If they have no vehicles by which they can express their opinion, then for them the freedom of the press does not exist.

T. S. E.

NOTES

1. In "A Survey of the Press / Inadequate U.S. News / Disturbing Tendencies," the *Times* of 7 Apr 1938 printed a full-column notice of the publication *Report on the British Press: A Survey of its Current Operations and Problems with Special Reference to National Newspapers and their Part in Public Affairs* (London: P E P, 1938), pp. 333.

2. TSE here condenses into a single quotation a number of descriptions found in the unpaginated preface of the P E P report by its anonymous secretary.

3. Subscription lists for *The Criterion* never significantly topped 300 throughout the life of the journal, although during the monthly *Criterion* period in 1927, total sales did exceed 1,000. After it reverted to quarterly publication, the journal's steep price of 7 shillings and sixpence contributed to lower circulation. Total sales near the end of its run (1938-39) were around 600.

4. *Trans*: with a large circulation

5. According to the Report, the daily circulation of *The Times* in 1937 was 192,000; two Sunday papers, *News of the World* and *People*, each had a circulation of just over 3,000,000: "It seems, perhaps fortunately, extremely doubtful whether . . . any one daily newspaper is ever likely to be in the position of having a larger circulation than all its rivals put together, and a circulation in the neighbourhood of 3,000,000 is probably about the limit for a daily newspaper under present competitive conditions" (86).

6. TSE noticed Soames's book in his "Commentary" for Jan 1937 (5.412) and again in "Mr. Reckitt, Mr. Tomlin and the Crisis" (5.449).

7. hole-and-corner: away from public view, secret, clandestine; insignificant. A "hole-and-corner paper," without its derogatory connotations, would be a provincial periodical, or one with a small or select readership.

8. TSE briefly addresses the Law of Libel in his "Commentary" of Jan 1937 (5.412). In Mar 1936 he was a signatory to a multiple-author letter to the *Times* under the heading "Authors and the Law of Libel" (5.762).

9. As an example of a "Co-operative paper," the *Report* describes *Reynolds News*, a Sunday newspaper established in 1850 and bought in 1929 by the Co-operative Press, which was subscribed by co-operative societies. "*Reynolds* is read to a large extent by members of co-operative societies and may therefore be said to be indirectly owned by its readers. . . . Evidently the Co-operative Movement, with its vast capital resources, is in a very different position for entering the newspaper field from any group of readers whipped up for the purpose. Attempts of this nature have usually failed, but they continue to be made at intervals" (275).

Professor H. H. Joachim

To the Editor of *The Times*

The Times (4 Aug 1938) 12

Mr. T. S. Eliot writes: I trust it will not be amiss for an old pupil to add a postscript to your obituary notice of the late Professor Joachim.[1] To him I owe not only whatever knowledge of the philosophy of Aristotle I may have once possessed but also whatever command of prose style I may still possess. There are other teachers also to whom I owe a debt of gratitude for stimulation of thought and curiosity, and for direction of studies: to Joachim alone am I aware of any debt for instruction in the writing of English. All readers of *The Nature of Truth* will acknowledge the distinction of Joachim's own writing: only those who have been his pupils know his influence upon the writing of others.[2] He taught me, in the course of criticizing weekly essays with a sarcasm the more authoritative because of its gentle impersonality, and because he was concerned with clearing up the confusion rather than with scoring off his victim, that one should know exactly what one meant before venturing to put words to paper, and that one should avoid metaphor wherever a plain statement can be found. To his *explication de texte* of the Posterior Analytics I owe an appreciation of the fact that good writing is impossible without clear and distinct ideas. Any virtues my prose writing may exhibit are due to his correction: my vices are too obviously my own for me to need to disclaim his responsibility. I would not offer you this note, did I not believe that I write, not as a singular example, but as a representative of those who have had the good fortune to have been taught by Harold Joachim.

NOTES

1. Following Joachim's death on 30 July at age 70, the *Times* published on 2 Aug an obituary, "Professor H. H. Joachim" (12), describing his full teaching and scholarly career at Oxford – as a fellow of Merton College from 1897 to 1919 (where TSE was his student from 1914 to 1915), and as the Wykeham Professor of Logic at New College from 1919 to 1935. "His unpublished lectures on the Ethics of Aristotle," wrote the author (presumably a former student or close colleague), "his notes on the Posterior Analytics and other works which he read with his classes all had the same authoritative character" as his philosophical writings. "Joachim was an impressive lecturer. His spare figure, his beautiful voice, his sensitive features and hands, seemed

congruous with the texture of his thought, and he conveyed forcibly the sense of a determination to follow out the implications of his subject-matter and to have nothing in his lectures loosely articulated or imperfectly expressed. . . . Many generations of students in philosophy in Oxford will remember the hospitality of Joachim and his wife, and the charm of a house which . . . was marked by great simplicity, friendliness, and dignity, and seemed subtly to convey the suggestion of an earlier Oxford tradition."

2. TSE read Joachim's *The Nature of Truth* (1906) at Harvard in the spring of 1913 before he went to Merton College in the fall of 1914 to begin weekly tutorials with Joachim that were focused on the philosophy of F. H. Bradley. Six of the essays that TSE wrote for Joachim during that Michaelmas term survive (1.165-92). During the Hilary and Trinity terms (Jan to June 1915), he studied Plato and Aristotle under Joachim, with six extant essays from that period (1.193-237). Though Josiah Royce, at Harvard, was the nominal director of TSE's doctoral dissertation on F. H. Bradley (1.238), Joachim was his primary mentor. Reflecting on his decision to leave the study of philosophy, TSE wrote to his mother on 2 Feb 1929: "I learnt all that I know about writing prose from studying the works of F. H. Bradley, and from the criticism I had from H. H. Joachim while at Oxford, and my study of philosophy has been of great advantage to me in directions in which I never expected it to be. So one never knows what to regret and what to be glad of!" (*L4* 411-12).

A Commentary

The Criterion: A Literary Review, 18 (Oct 1938) 58-62

In the last issue of *The Criterion* we gave first place among the reviews to a notice by Mr. Middleton Murry of Señor Mendizábal's book on the Spanish War, *Aux Origines d'une tragédie*, with its long and important introduction by Jacques Maritain.[1] In the August issue of *Blackfriars* I find an interesting note to which I refer for two reasons: first, because the incident does not appear to have received much notice elsewhere in this country, and second, because those who have approved the independent and courageous position of Maritain should have the opportunity of affirming their approval. It seems that Señor Serrano Suñer, General Franco's Minister of the Interior, attacked M. Maritain very violently in a speech which is reported in *La Gaceta Regional* of Salamanca, a speech making at least one allegation which, besides being untrue, would probably be regarded in England as definitely libellous. *Blackfriars* gives some extracts from the report. What inflamed Señor Suñer's anger appears to have been, primarily, M. Maritain's refusal to admit the assertion that the war of the *Franquistas* is a "holy war."[2]

The importance of Señor Suñer's outburst need not be exaggerated. He is not the first politician to utter foolish and intemperate words; a politician can be quite efficient at his job without having much intellectual ability; and a person of that type, in the midst of a civil war, would have to be a very superior person indeed to appreciate the just impartiality of a Christian philosopher. Nor is it necessary for us to put the emphasis where *Blackfriars*, for its own public, quite rightly puts it.[3] Our concern should be rather with that part of the public which is inclined to attribute all the "holiness" of this war to the party of Valencia and Barcelona, and which, though not likely to express its views so immoderately as Señor Suñer, would hardly find M. Maritain's philosophy any more acceptable. I do not refer, of course, so much to the small number of communists, as to the larger number of the heirs of liberalism, who find an emotional outlet in denouncing the iniquity of something called "fascism." If the intellectual is a person of philosophical mind philosophically trained, who thinks things out for himself, then there are very few intellectuals about, and indeed the

position of M. Maritain is as "intellectual" a position (as well as being Christian) as anyone could adopt.

The irresponsible "anti-fascist," the patron of mass-meetings and manifestoes, is a danger in several ways. His activities, when exploited by a foreign press, are capable of nourishing abroad the very ideas which he so vehemently repudiates; they confuse the issues of real politics with misplaced religious fanaticism; and they distract attention from the true evils in their own society. What some of these evils are may be learned by reading Viscount Lymington's *Famine in England* (Witherby: 7s. 6d. net). The ideas of the small minority may be causes: the ideas of the mob are merely symptoms, and often very deceptive symptoms indeed. Lord Lymington's book is concerned with agriculture, but with agriculture as it concerns everybody. "Exchangers," he remarks in his Preface, "are less important than producers, and among producers it is those who till the soil upon whom civilization is based, more than upon those who mine or manufacture."[4] It is a melancholy thought that only the imminent danger of a national famine in the event of war arouses people's minds to the neglect of the land: it is better that they should be aroused by that prospect than not at all. But Lord Lymington is still more concerned with the apparently inevitable deterioration, not merely of the land, but of its people – whether we have war or peace – if the present tendencies are not checked. His particular views about the state of agriculture, and the measures to be taken to improve it, have been dealt with by a few reviewers qualified to criticize them: I am interested in this context rather in the general bearings and implications. To understand thoroughly what is wrong with agriculture is to understand what is wrong with nearly everything else: with the domination of Finance, with our ideals and system of Education, indeed with our whole philosophy of life; and he who is able to look for such implications in this book will be able to find them.[5*] What is fundamentally wrong is the *urbanization of mind* of which I have previously spoken, and which is increasingly prevalent as those who rule, those who speak, those who write, are developed in increasing numbers from an urban background. To have the right frame of mind it is not enough that we should read Wordsworth, tramp the countryside with a book of British Birds and a cake of chocolate in a rucksack, or even own a country estate: it is necessary that the greater part of the population, of all classes (so long as we have classes) should be settled in the country and dependent upon it. One sees no hope either in the Labour Party or in the equally unimaginative dominant section of the

Conservative Party. There seems no hope in contemporary politics at all. Meanwhile the supposed progressive and enlightened "intellectuals" shout themselves hoarse in denunciations of foreign systems of life which they have not taken the trouble to comprehend; having never considered that the preliminary to criticizing anything must be an attempt to understand how it came about, and that criticism involves discerning the good from which we might profit, as a qualification for condemning the evil which we wish to avoid. Another characteristic of the type of mind which is doctrinaire without being truly philosophic, is to assume that *all* problems are soluble: which leads to the ignoring of those which are of such large compass as to appear to present insuperable difficulties. And here the simplifying theorist and the hand-to-mouth politician have a common ground against those who would like to look a little more widely and deeply, in the situation of the present, and a little further, in the prospect of the future.

I am glad to print in the present issue a letter from Mr. Desmond Hawkins objecting to a sentence in the last "Commentary."[6] Mr. Hawkins has, I think, taken literally a remark which was meant to be ironic; but if he has done so, others have probably read it in the same way; and I am glad if there is a misunderstanding which can be cleared up. I wished to call attention to a situation, not to give a tip to editors anxious to economise; the situation is that the periodicals for which an intelligent man is glad to write, apart from financial compulsion, those in which he finds himself in the most congenial company, tend to be those which cannot pay adequately or cannot pay at all; and these indeed are likely to be subsidised in some way, or run at a loss to somebody. No one will disagree, that the first claim upon a "literary" periodical ("literary" in the widest sense) beyond its running expenses, is adequate remuneration of the contributors: which means in effect that it can never be a profitable investment. As for periodicals which flourish owing to their political interest, or more usually owing to their "news" (in the comprehensive and miscellaneous meaning that the word has to-day), I should say that their literary contributors ought to be paid at higher rates than their accountants would be likely to approve. For the point of paying literary contributors highly is that obviously they can only do their best work if they do not have too much to do; if they are paid at such a rate that they can be free from anxiety, and at the same time have leisure – for original work which cannot be immediately remunerative – or even just for thinking.

As things are, I should say that it is increasingly difficult for a writer to make even a modest steady income out of reviewing to-day, without reviewing a great many more books than he ought to have to review, or without reviewing a good many books in which he is not interested – he may even find himself obliged to review books which he does not feel competent to review. And if at the same time he wishes to do some original or creative work, this will be constantly interrupted and put aside, or toiled over when his mind is too fatigued to do its best. And a little later, as literary reputation precedes the more tangible rewards of good work, he will find himself constantly begged to perform tasks for which no payment is offered at all.

I do not think (and I do not believe that Mr. Hawkins would object to this assertion) that a literary periodical can be carried on without the amateur as well as the professional writer. By the amateur I mean the man who either because of some other vocation that he follows, or aside from it, has a mastery of a particular subject; by the professional I mean both the man who finds his full vocation in journalism, and the man who uses it for a livelihood while engaged in original work aiming at such high standards that he can expect only a negligible addition to his income from it, e.g. poetry. It is as easy for me as for Mr. Hawkins to think of writers who are only paid, like one of his correspondents, when they interrupt their real work. For most of my life, when I needed money, I did not write poetry: I wrote – or talked – about it. I ask, like Mr. Hawkins, what is to be done? Perhaps other contributors would like to make suggestions.

T. S. E.

NOTES

1. Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1937; reviewed in the *Criterion* of July 1938 (718-21). Alfredo Mendizábal Villalba (1897-1981) was an eminent professor of law at the University of Oviedo; the volume appeared in English as *The Martyrdom of Spain: Origins of a Civil War*, with a preface by Jacques Maritain (London, 1937).

2. "Extracts and Comments," *Blackfriars*, 19 (Aug 1938), 608-13. Ramón Serrano Suñer (1901-2003), brother-in-law of General Franco, President of the Spanish Falange, and Nationalist Minister of the Interior since Feb 1938, is quoted as saying that Maritain is "a convert Jew who perpetrates the infamy of shouting of the housetops the lie of Franco's massacres, and commits the colossal stupidity of maintaining the legitimacy of the Barcelona government. . . . The *sagesse* of Maritain has an accent that recalls that of the Sages of Israel, and has the spurious manner of the Jewish democracies. We know that he is going to receive, or already receives, the homage of Lodges and the Synagogues. We have the right to question the sincerity of his conversion, and before the Catholic world we denounce this terrible menace of treason" (608-09).

3. In its "Critique" of the "Extracts," *Blackfriars* stated: "For ourselves we cannot but regret that so many quite distinct issues have been allowed to become confused in the heat of controversy. . . . It is one thing to maintain that Spanish Catholics . . . have become bound by a tragic necessity to wage a *just* war for the preservation of their religion and their nation; it is quite another thing to maintain that their way is a *holy* war which involves the Church at large and the Catholics of all nations. . . . And, whatever be the truth about Badajoz and Guernica, the question of *means*, on which Maritain has rightly laid so much emphasis, is paramount" (611-13).

4. London, 1938, 6. TSE has initialed the copy in his library. Gerard Wallop, 9th Earl of Portsmouth (1898-1984), styled Viscount Lymington from 1925 to 1943, engaged in agricultural work at Farleigh Wallop in Hampshire and served as Conservative Member of Parliament from 1929 to 1934. In 1936, he assumed leadership of English Array, a back-to-the-land movement; in 1938 he became editor of the *New Pioneer* magazine and founded the British Council Against European Commitments.

5*. TSE's note: "Mr. Middleton Murry's *Heaven and Earth*, which will have been published before this commentary appears, will, I believe, be of great interest to those who are concerned with these problems." A copy of *Heaven – and Earth*, published by Jonathan Cape in 1938, is in TSE's library. "What I seek to show in this book," writes Murry in the preface, "is that the civilization in which we live is a Christian civilization and that it can be understood only if we are prepared to think of it in those terms. . . . What I mean by saying that ours is a Christian civilization is that Christianity has been its distinctive motive force. . . . Either this civilization of ours will preserve its continuity as a Christian civilization, or it will give way – after a period of chaos and barbarism such as is truly beyond our capacity to *imagine* – to a civilization which is not Christian at all" (7).

6. Desmond Hawkins (1908-99), literary editor of *Purpose*, opens his letter (printed in *Criterion*, 18 [Oct 1938], 96-98) by saying that he is "so completely in agreement with the substance of your Commentary on small periodicals that I want to take exception to one remark which is liable to be very damaging. It is that 'there is something to be said for not paying, or for under-paying contributors, in that this gives some assurance that the writer really has something that he wants to say.'"

The Future of Poetic Drama[1]

Drama: A Monthly Record of the Theatre in Town and Country at Home & Abroad, 17 (Oct 1938) 3-5

I should consider it an impertinence to endeavour to instruct such an audience as this on the nature of poetic drama in general; or to discuss what can be done better, and what can not be done so well, in verse drama compared with prose. Nor do I wish to talk about the future of verse drama in all languages. With any of these arts, the material of which is *words*, its future depends upon the situation of a particular language at a particular time, and, I may add, in a particular place. Therefore I shall limit myself, in the time at my disposal, to the future of poetic drama in English, and in England. I would not even venture to discuss its future in America. I hope that, by confining myself within these limits, I may be able to make a few remarks of greater interest, and I hope of more usefulness, than if I roamed about a larger field.

Assuming, therefore, that a flourishing poetic drama is desirable, its establishment depends obviously upon the happy concurrence of four classes of people: the authors, the producers, the actors, and the public. I will say at once that our deficiency is likely to be in the first and third – authors and actors – rather than in producers or public. To producers I need not devote much attention. We have actually a number of producers who are willing to experiment with contemporary verse plays, and several who would prefer to specialise in them: and among these producers are a few at least who are thoroughly competent. And I am speaking primarily of those who are willing to produce verse plays as a commercial venture: if we add the producers and groups of interested people who are eager for verse plays for occasional productions for religious and charitable purposes, the current demand for such plays is very considerable. There is always, in fact, a serious shortage of contemporary verse plays, from the producer's point of view.

As for the public, I think that the last few years have proved that there is less resistance to verse as a dramatic medium than was formerly supposed. There is, I believe, a small public which *prefers*, other things being equal, that plays should be in verse. These are the people who go seldom to the

theatre, except to performances of Shakespeare: they may not be very plentiful, but they are the nucleus of our public. There is a larger public which is quite glad of the occasional variety of a poetic play, and this public I think could be enlarged almost indefinitely, if we can break down the assumption – hitherto quite justified – that a play in verse is a play written by a man who does not know how to write plays. I am disregarding the accidental public which is attracted to one play or another by its subject-matter – religious or political – and which is neither interested nor competent to judge of anything but the soundness or congeniality of the ideas expressed or the causes advocated. I am only concerned with the public which is, or is capable of being, interested in dramatic poetry.

I do not wish to exaggerate the avidity of the appetite for verse plays. It is certainly prudence on the part of producers at present to launch such plays in small theatres, and it is prudence for the authors to construct plays which do not require large casts or expensive setting. It is to the good when the plays are such as can also be acted by amateurs, without too much agony for the amateurs or for their audiences. But I believe that the public for verse plays is all that we are in a position to ask, and that the next thing necessary is to have more and better verse plays. And, at the same time, to educate more actors capable of acting in verse – and I say acting in verse, not merely declaiming poetry.

I will pass on to the problem of the actor, in order to end with the problem of the author – that which I might be supposed to understand most fully. The position of the actor at present is very difficult. Assuming that he sticks to the stage, and does not divert any of his activity to the film – which further complicates the problem – he comes with a training and experience of plays in prose: indeed of plays for the most part of which can hardly be said to be written even in prose – the actor's success may have been due to his ability to reproduce the ordinary broken English of the ordinary Englishman of to-day. By "prose" I mean something at least a little better than what the ordinary man speaks: I do not believe that people in the seventeenth century talked like Congreve's characters, and we know that the middle classes of the last generation did not employ the beautiful English of Mr. Shaw. And if the actor has devoted most of his time to Shakespeare, the situation is hardly better. I have said elsewhere that we cannot expect actors to speak Shakespeare properly until we can give them good contemporary dramatic verse to speak: until then the verse of Shakespeare must remain largely a dead language. The tendency in

speaking Shakespeare has been to avoid self-consciousness and artificiality only at the cost of making his verse sound as much like prose as possible.[2] This tradition is so strong as to provide one reason why a contemporary verse play in English *cannot* be written in regular blank verse. And so far as my own experimentation has carried me, I believe that the kinds of versification which are possible for verse plays to-day are such as will make very great demands upon the intelligence and the attentiveness of the actor. I say attentiveness, because I am sure that good modern verse cannot be well spoken without studying each line by itself. The moment an actor speaks each line as if the stresses and the long and short syllables were in exactly the same position as in the preceding line, the result is a soporific drone such as has sometimes been imposed upon Shakespeare. The cause is partly that versification, so far as it is taught at all, is traditionally taught wrong (just as, according to that great authority Professor Jespersen, English grammar has been taught as if it was Latin),[3] and partly that with speaking verse, as with singing or playing, there is no substitute for being born with a good ear.

It is possible that, to get perfect verse speech from actors, we may eventually have to choose them very young, seeking a happy combination of histrionic ability with an ear for dramatic poetry, and then see that they are in a position to refuse to take part in any prose plays, except perhaps a very few. No proposals from authors whose prose falls below the standards of Congreve or Mr. Shaw should be entertained. Our perfect verse actor, you see, will have to be something of a hero and an ascetic, if not a martyr.[4]

What I have said about the actor makes clear that the actor for verse plays waits not only upon the public but upon the authors. A successful play is the result of co-operation between authors, actors, producers, and public – the parts are interdependent; but at present I should say that the next move is with the authors. We are in the rather humiliating position that the demand for actable verse plays actually exceeds the supply. I have said elsewhere, and I still believe, that, failing the appearance of a spontaneous genius who should have equal and supreme gifts as both dramatist and poet, we are more likely to get tolerable verse plays from poets who have laboured to learn the art of the theatre, than from dramatists who have toiled to write verse.[5] But the poet has a great deal to learn. He has not only to learn everything that the successful dramatist knows, but he has his special labour of investigation. It is not sufficient to learn the craft of the theatre and then fill your play with good poetry; you have to learn to write a

special kind of poetry which is different from what you have written before. To put it in the simplest terms: a poet writes his ordinary poetry implicitly to be spoken by *himself*: he must write his dramatic poetry remembering that it is to be spoken by someone else. This is a very important distinction. I find that in my first draft of a play there are passages which seem to me first-rate, and they are likely to be the ones that I have to remove. They may be plums, but if so it is right that plums should be pulled out; they are poetry, but they are my poetry and not that of my character who speaks them. When a poet, however brilliant and accomplished, begins to write for the theatre, he must regard himself as a beginner, not only in the theatre, but in a new kind of verse. So he needs to acquire a good deal of humility: I can hold out to him the hope that his labour may result in a certain moral purification, even if it has no other result.

I am not altogether hopeful, for the following reasons, one economic, the other moral and social. A poet beginning to write for the theatre cannot be sure that as a result of great labour he will write a good play: and even if it is a good play there is no reason to be confident that it will succeed. It is very difficult for him to find the time. Unless a poet has an independent income, he must have some occupation to live by, for one cannot support oneself by poetry. By the time he can arrange his life so as to be able to give the time to writing plays – and that means, for one author at least, three hours a morning *regularly* – he is likely to have a good many other calls upon his time: such as invitations to speak in public. It is still more difficult if he has, as several poets under my observation have, other interests. It is a result of the social conditions of our time that any active, intelligent and earnest writer is likely to have several public interests. To some extent this is necessary, to keep one's soul and mind awake. There is further temptation in the fact that increasing reputation provides a man with some audience for almost anything that he chooses to talk about. One of the most promising attempts in poetic drama, amongst those of my younger contemporaries, is the *Trial of a Judge* by my friend Stephen Spender.[6] But when I consider the number of interests that occupy Mr. Spender, I wonder whether he will ever find the time to perfect the art he has begun.

This sounds a dismal note on which to end, but I think we shall only get anywhere by facing the difficulties first. In view of the success, even when only of esteem, of a few verse plays in the last few years, I think we are likely to see a succession of young writers each trying his hand at a verse play, only to drop the drama when he finds that his first effort does not meet with

enthusiastic approval. Just as a great many people to-day write novels, but we have very few novelists. What I should prefer to see – and it is the only way for poetic drama to have any future at all – is that a very few poets should devote themselves exclusively and continuously, so far as their circumstances permit, to this medium of expression. Assuming that we continue to produce a little poetic talent of a high enough level, then we can have a poetic drama; but it will exact of the authors conviction, ardour, and sacrifice.

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. An editorial statement precedes TSE's text: "An Address delivered to the International Theatre Congress, Stratford-on-Avon, in July." TSE was invited by Geoffrey Whitworth (1883-1951), founder of the British Drama League, editor of its journal, and honorable secretary of the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre Committee, to speak at the League's annual conference in Stratford on 5 July 1938. While preparing the address, TSE wrote to John Betjeman on 22 June: "I cannot help thinking at the moment that if people will ask me to talk about Verse Drama, it is all the less likely to have any future at all."

2. "I do not mean merely that the modern actor cannot succeed in an old play," TSE wrote in "*The Duchess of Malfi* at the Lyric: and Poetic Drama" (1920), "but that he cannot succeed in any play which is literary art. The ordinary modern play is made for the actor. Accordingly, as I said before, we have seen every Hamlet but Shakespeare's. As *Hamlet* is performed, only the plot is Shakespeare's; and the words might as well be the flattest prose" (2.172-73).

3. TSE's library contains Danish linguist Otto Jespersen's *Language: Its Nature, Development and Origin*, 3rd edn. (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1925). TSE also reviewed Jespersen's *The Philosophy of Grammar* (1924) in the *Criterion* for Jan 1927 (3.8). Jespersen was known for his seven-volume *A Modern English Grammar on Historical Principles* (1909-49).

4. In "*The Duchess of Malfi* at the Lyric: and Poetic Drama," TSE objects to the tendency of modern actors to take creative liberties with performances of poetic dramas, arguing that "poetry is something which the actor cannot improve or 'interpret'; there is no such thing as the interpretation of poetry; poetry can only be transmitted; in consequence, the ideal actor for a poetic drama is the actor *with no personal vanity*" (2.173).

5. The distinction TSE draws here between poet and dramatist is less pronounced in earlier essays, which generally collapse the distinction. In "Four Elizabethan Dramatists: A Preface to an Unwritten Book" (1924), for instance, TSE takes issue with the "modern opinion" that "poetry and drama are two separate things, which can only be *combined* by a writer of exceptional genius" (2.503). A clearer line is drawn in "A Dialogue on Dramatic Poetry" (1928), in which TSE's imagined interlocutor B challenges William Archer's stance on the drama of Henrik Ibsen, insisting that "dramatic defects *can* be compensated by poetic excellence. . . . We can cite Shakespeare." Figure C, in turn, seeks clarification: "Do you mean that Shakespeare is a greater dramatist than Ibsen, not by being a greater dramatist, but by being a greater poet?" And B replies, "That is precisely what I mean. For, on the other hand, what great poetry is not dramatic?" (3.403).

6. *Trial of a Judge* was published by Faber and Faber in 1938. In a letter to Spender of 22 Mar 1938, TSE expressed that he was "very much impressed and moved" by the Group Theatre's recent production of the drama. TSE continues: "It was also much better produced than I expected, and my only criticism of the acting was that the Judge tottered more frequently than seemed to me necessary. . . . My chief criticism of the play itself, on the stage, is that I thought there was too much poetry. It seems to me that for the stage one needs a good deal of straightforward simple verse. So much poetry is deadening to one's sensibility, and also doesn't leave any reserve for hammering with particular passages and phrases. Some phrases . . . seemed to me to lose some of their proper effect by not being surrounded by a rather flatter verse."

Last Words

The Criterion: A Literary Review, 18 (Jan 1939) 269-75

With this number I terminate my editorship of *The Criterion*. I have been considering this decision for about two years: but I did not wish to come to a conclusion precipitately, because I knew that my retirement would bring *The Criterion* to an end. During the autumn, however, the prospect of war had involved me in hurried plans for suspending publication; and in the subsequent *détente* I became convinced that my enthusiasm for continuing the editorial work did not exist.[1]

Sixteen years is a long time for one man to remain editor of a review; for this review, I have sometimes wondered whether it has not been too long. A feeling of staleness has crept over me, and a suspicion that I ought to retire before I was aware that this feeling had communicated itself to the readers. A stale editor cannot do his contributors justice. I have also felt a growing discontent, in that increase of work in other directions (both inside and outside of Russell Square) has made it less and less possible for me to perform to my own satisfaction a job which might well occupy the whole of one man's time. I am convinced that *The Criterion* is not the kind of review which can be taken up and continued by one editor after another. Another man might make something better of it, but he would have to make something very different; and in so doing he would be handicapped rather than aided by *The Criterion*'s tradition. If a similar review is needed, then it will be far better for someone else to start a new review with a new title. New conditions will very likely require new methods and somewhat different aims.

The Criterion has, I believe, represented a definite though (I hope) comprehensive constellation of contributors; whatever part it may have played in the literary history of these sixteen years should emerge all the more definitely for its having begun and ended under one editorship. At this point, I trust that a brief review of its phases, both material and intellectual, is not out of place. *The Criterion* was founded in 1922 by the generosity of Viscountess Rothermere; the general intention was that it should serve as a kind of successor to the defunct *Art and Letters*.[2] No one expected that it would be more than an "amateur" review: its editing was the evening

occupation of an editor who, being on the staff of a City bank, was not in a position to accept a salary. In the first years I owed much, for a time, to the assistance of Mr. Richard Aldington; and during the whole of the first period especially to the late Miss Irene Fassett, my first secretary. There was an interim during which the review was kept alive by the support of a number of benefactors whose names I could not mention without asking their permission severally. Two of them, however, I feel at liberty to name because they have since died; and because I depended on their encouragement throughout: Charles Whibley and Frederick Scott Oliver. Subsequently, the finances of *The Criterion* were wholly taken over by the firm of Faber & Faber. I welcome this opportunity of expressing my appreciation of the complete editorial freedom which I have enjoyed.

It should be apparent from what I have just said, that *The Criterion* did not start with any ambition of emulating the traditional type of British quarterly. It was a quarterly partly for reasons of economy, but also because the editor then had so little time to give to it. It certainly acquired a definite quarterly character; and during a brief period when it was run as a monthly, I came to the conclusion that whatever editorial talent I possessed did not extend to the preparation of a review appearing oftener than four times a year. But so far as *The Criterion* measured itself against more "professional" periodicals, they were certain reviews, many of them now extinct, published abroad. The *Nouvelle Revue Française* still flourishes; there was the *Revista de Occidente* (under Ortega y Gasset); the *Journal de Genève* (under Robert de Traz); the *Neue Rundschau*, the *Dial* of New York, and others.[3] It was the aim of *The Criterion* to maintain close relations with other literary reviews of its type, on the Continent and in America; and to provide in London a local forum of international thought.

The period immediately following the war of 1914 is often spoken of as a time of disillusionment: in some ways and for some people it was rather a period of illusions. Only from about the year 1926 did the features of the post-war world begin clearly to emerge – and not only in the sphere of politics. From about that date one began slowly to realize that the intellectual and artistic output of the previous seven years had been rather the last efforts of an old world, than the first struggles of a new. As late as the year 1929, I find that *The Criterion* undertook to co-operate with four other reviews – the *Nouvelle Revue Française*, the *Revista de Occidente*, the *Nuova Antologia*, and the *Europäische Revue* – for the annual award of a prize for a short story, the choice to be made from among writers of each of the five

languages in rotation. The first award was made to Ernst Wiechert, for a story "The Centurion," which was duly published in each of the five reviews: after that the enterprise lapsed.[4] In the same year I find myself stating with pride that *The Criterion* had been the first periodical in England to print the work of such writers as Marcel Proust, Paul Valéry, Jacques Rivière, Jean Cocteau, Ramon Fernandez, Jacques Maritain, Charles Maurras, Henri Massis, Wilhelm Worringer, Max Scheler, E. R. Curtius. There were other distinguished foreign contributors, such as Pirandello, whose work may have appeared in other English periodicals previously.[5]

Such was the activity of *The Criterion* during the first half of its career. Gradually communications became more difficult, contributions more uncertain, and new and important foreign contributors more difficult to discover. The "European mind," which one had mistakenly thought might be renewed and fortified, disappeared from view: there were fewer writers in any country who seemed to have anything to say to the intellectual public of another. Divisions of political theory became more important; alien minds took alien ways, and Britain and France appeared to be progressing nowhere. Here in England, a definitely post-war generation began to speak. At this stage, our efforts turned to what was possible in a situation of enforced insularity; to the introduction of younger British writers, and the extension and development of "Books of the Quarter." Of the international attempt, the chief vestiges are the Foreign Chronicles and the Reviews of Foreign Periodicals.

I have felt obscurely during the last eight years or so – and how obscure and confused my own mind has been, my Commentaries bear painful witness – the grave dangers to this country which might result from the lack of any vital political philosophy, either explicit or implicit. (To this need, writers in France – witness many of the books and periodicals which Mr. Belgion has from time to time discussed in his chronicle[6] – have been more alive than we, though unhappily their thinking has not yet introduced any unanimity or order.) For myself, a right political philosophy came more and more to imply a right theology – and right economics to depend upon right ethics: leading to emphases which somewhat stretched the original framework of a literary review. In retrospect, it would seem that perhaps I devoted too much of my gossiping attention, as Commentator, to the doctrines of communism. I can only say that I was commenting on ideas, or the lack of them, and not engaging in political prophecy. I was concerned with ideas chiefly as they originated in, or penetrated to, England; and the

version of fascism, which was offered locally, appeared to have no great intellectual interest – and what is perhaps more important, was not sufficiently adaptable to be grafted on to the stock of Toryism – whereas communism flourished because it grew so easily on the Liberal root.

During these years, the persons in this country who are not Liberals by temperament, and who are not attracted by the ambitious drudgery of practical politics, have remained dispersed and isolated. Some have been engaged in promoting the claims of one or another scheme of monetary reform; I am as convinced as anybody of the necessity of such change; but unfortunately the tendency of concentration upon technical economics has been to divide rather than to unite.[7*] I have wondered whether it would not have been more profitable, instead of trying to maintain literary standards increasingly repudiated in the modern world, to have endeavoured to rally intellectual effort to affirm those principles of life and policy from the lack of which we are suffering disastrous consequences. But such a task, again, would be outside the scope of *The Criterion*, would require the whole of the editor's time, and probably a more competent editor: this is perhaps another indication that *The Criterion* has served its purpose.

It should not be inappropriate, at this point, to turn to consider the probable future of the literary review. There have been recently some signs of apprehension about the decline of literacy: I cite the series of articles in the *Times Literary Supplement* called "Present Discontents," and a letter from Mr. Middleton Murry, on the state of reviewing, which followed them.[8] And a curious symptom was the appearance, in the *Times Literary Supplement* also, which has recently abandoned its policy of anonymity of contributors, of an excellent article defending anonymity, by Mr. Stephen Spender – with his name in large type, and a portrait of Mr. Spender in the centre.[9]

I would refer the reader to "Present Discontents" (now reprinted as a pamphlet)[10] for a survey of some of the specifically literary symptoms of decline. For they are only symptoms; they cannot be treated by themselves; the demoralization of society goes very much deeper. Even the terms used by those who are to some extent conscious of this demoralization are sometimes alarming: to use a phrase like "moral re-armament" is to be in danger of betraying the word "moral," of suggesting that Britain should merely invoke "morals" in order to compete with the modern world on its own terms, instead of finding better terms; is to risk the accusation of seeking to arouse enthusiasm and sacrifice for an order which is in important respects

inferior to that which threatens to supersede it, instead of for the realization of an order which would be better.[11] It will perhaps need more severe affliction than anything we have yet experienced, before life can be renewed. As the state of arts and letters is a symptom of decline, so it might be a symptom of a true revival. But in any case, the immediate future is not bright.

For this immediate future, perhaps for a long way ahead, the continuity of culture may have to be maintained by a very small number of people indeed – and these not necessarily the best equipped with worldly advantages. It will not be the large organs of opinion, or the old periodicals; it must be the small and obscure papers and reviews, those which hardly are read by anyone but their own contributors, that will keep critical thought alive, and encourage authors of original talent. I wish that a periodical could be sold like admission to a theatre, at a varying scale of prices; for just as the majority of the more critical and appreciative part of the public is often to be found in the cheaper seats, so I suspect that the price at which *The Criterion* has had to be published is prohibitive to most of the readers who are qualified to appreciate what is good in it, and to criticise what is faulty.

In the present state of public affairs – which has induced in myself a depression of spirits so different from any other experience of fifty years as to be a new emotion – I no longer feel the enthusiasm necessary to make a literary review what it should be. This is not to suggest that I consider literature to be at this time, or at any time, a matter of indifference. On the contrary, I feel that it is all the more essential that authors who are concerned with that small part of "literature" which is really creative – and seldom immediately popular – should apply themselves sedulously to their work, without abatement or sacrifice of their artistic standards on any pretext whatsoever.

I wish in closing to express my gratitude to the contributors to *The Criterion*, during sixteen years, and especially to those whose contributions have been most constant. My thanks are due especially to the reviewers: for a review up to the standard which we have endeavoured to keep, is a piece of work costing the writer more time and thought than any practicable scale of payment can remunerate. And particularly to those who have, from time to time, assumed the arduous responsibility of reviewing foreign and other periodicals: the labour of reading and digesting a mass of periodicals is, on any scale of payment, a labour of love. *The Criterion* has brought me

associations, friendships and acquaintanceships of inestimable value; I like also to think that it may have served contributors, by initiating friendships and acquaintances between those who might not otherwise have met, or known each other's work.

T. S. E.

NOTES

1. TSE wrote to Geoffrey Faber on 1 Oct 1938: "It occurs to me to suggest that nothing should be said about the termination of *The Criterion*, and that no rumour should reach even the secretaries, until we have decided exactly how and when." When TSE determined to conclude the periodical with the Jan 1939 issue, he asked John Hayward on 27 Dec to place an announcement in the *Sunday Times* after the copies of Hayward and the contributors had been received. The announcement appeared in the issue of 1 Jan: "The last number of the *Criterion*, the quarterly review that Mr. T. S. Eliot has edited since its foundation sixteen years ago, was published yesterday. . . . The consistency of its intellectual and artistic standards owed much to its having been under a single editorship from first to last. The *Criterion*, indeed, must be counted as one of Mr. Eliot's most striking contributions to the literary history of our time" (11). TSE then proceeded to write personal notes to his contributors, including George Every, to whom he wrote on 5 Jan that he "cared much more that [the *Criterion*] should be of use to the contributors whom I valued, than I have cared about the public. Indeed, beyond the contributors, I don't know what the public was." A second announcement appeared in the *TLS* of 7 Jan under "News and Notes" (1).

2. TSE contributed drama reviews and poems to Sidney Schiff's *Art and Letters* from 1919 to its demise in the spring of 1920. An account of the transition to the *Criterion* appears in 2.xxviii.

3. Jean Paulhan became editor of the *Nouvelle Revue française* in 1935; in 1923, José Ortega y Gasset founded *Revista de Occidente*, which he edited until 1936; the novelist Robert de Traz (1884-1951) was a war correspondent for the *Journal de Genève*; he later founded and edited the *Revue de Genève* from 1920 to 1930. When John Hayward wrote to TSE to ask about de Traz, TSE replied on 30 Jan 1939: "What about Robert de Traz? Well. What about him? I don't know, frankly, I don't know." *Die neue Rundschau* was under the editorship of Peter Suhrkamp from 1933; Marianne Moore was editor of the *Dial* from 1925 to its demise in 1929.

4. A description of the multijournal award appears in TSE's "Commentary" of July 1929, together with the list of foreign contributors first published in England by the *Criterion* (3.653).

5. Luigi Pirandello's story "The Shrine" appeared in the second issue of the *Criterion* in Jan 1923 (157-70). TSE's view of Pirandello's plays and stories appears in his 1926 review of Eugene O'Neill's plays (2.783-84).

6. Montgomery Belgion's French Chronicle appeared intermittently in six issues of the *Criterion* from Oct 1932 to Jan 1939.

7*. TSE's note: "I ought to remark that the policy of the *New English Weekly*, with which I have been in general sympathy, has been to set these considerations in a wider context of social values."

8. The three-part "Present Discontents" by an anonymous "correspondent" (Orlo Williams) examined symptoms of literary decline in "The Author" (6 Aug, 518), "Editor, Publisher and Public" (13 Aug, 530), and "Signs for the Future" (20 Aug, 542). The series prompted John Middleton Murry's letter to the editor, "Thoughts on Reviewing" (17 Sept, 597), in which he laments "the almost complete disappearance of professional reviewing" over the last twenty-five years.

9. "A Plea for More Anonymity: The Future of Reviewing" (8 Oct, 642); the portrait of Spender is from a drawing by Henry Moore. When D. L. Murray became editor of the *TLS* in 1938, he invited contributions from TSE, who replied on 23 May: "I presume, of course, that you mean unsigned leaders such as I have had pleasure in writing in the past, because a great deal of the pleasure as well as of the discipline which I have derived from writing for the *Supplement* has been due to its anonymity."

10. No bibliographical record of such a pamphlet has been located; TSE may have been confused by *TLS* notices on 29 Oct and 5 Nov 1938 of *Our Present Discontents* by William Inge.

11. TSE expands on his objections to the phrase "moral re-armament" in his Notes to *The Idea of a Christian Society* (5.727).

Liberal Manifesto

To the Editor of *The Church Times*

The Church Times, 121 (27 Jan 1939) 78

Sir, – Your leading article of last week may evoke replies from those better qualified to speak than myself; in any event, I wish it to be understood that I write only for myself and without consultation with any other signatories.[1]

I gather from your article that the impression left upon your mind was of excellent intentions expressed in a slipshod way. I myself deprecate the continued use of the term "Liberal Catholic," unless the Liberalism is understood to consist in an attitude to ecclesiastical polity, and not to theology. "Liberal Theology" seems to me about as useful a term as "Liberal Mathematics" would be; and I should prefer to call myself a Catholic without qualification. But as you devote your first paragraph to an affirmation of your own Liberalism, this is not here an issue. What surprises me is that, in the latter part of your article, you should treat the manifesto as if it was designed to be a comprehensive statement on all pressing Church problems. I should have thought it evident that such matters as government and administration, or the reform of church machinery, did not come within the purview of this document.

I cannot be the only person who regretted the publication of the Report of the Doctrinal Commission, although in agreement with much that it contained; or who regarded as ill-advised the protest issued by the Catholic Advisory Council, though, again, agreeing with much that it contained.[2] (The former, if privately circulated, might have been left to such incisive but temperate criticism as that of Fr. Hebert.)[3] Such, at least, is the context for myself, I therefore welcomed a statement which – with certain imperfections: the use of the word "missionary" in so brief a statement is perhaps unfortunate[4] – appeared to take its stand upon the Anglican tradition, and to maintain the Catholicity of the Church, rather than the Catholicism of a party. I do not think that the admissions remarked upon in your last paragraph constitute any surrender of principle, but only a recognition of the conditions which we have to face, and which perhaps only a small number of clergy are so happily placed as to be able to ignore.[5] Laxity of discipline

is regrettable. But would you yourself advocate, under present conditions, the excommunication of persons practicing usury? Yet there is authority and reason for it, as well as for excommunication for the reasons commonly recognized.

T. S. ELIOT

24, RUSSELL SQUARE, LONDON, W. C. 1.

NOTES

1. In the *Church Times* of 20 Jan, the editor responded to the printing in the same issue of "A Liberal Manifesto / The Place of Reason in the Thought of the Church," the text of which was preceded by a list of twenty ecclesiastical and lay signatories, including TSE (5.769). The manifesto was an expression of the signatories' belief "that it is urgently necessary at the present time to give due expression to the Liberal Catholic tradition within the Church of England," and in the further belief "that if Anglo-Catholicism is to play the part [in removing the divisions within Christendom] which it might, certain present tendencies must be counteracted in regard alike to worship and to teaching." In the editor's response, titled "A Liberal Manifesto" (60-61), he asserted that some of the declarations, "far from being inspired by the spirit of God, are in fact inspired rather by the spirit of unreason and confusion. Faith in spiritual inspiration without any provision for the discernment of spirits is as rash as faith in moral progress without allowance for the devil" (61).

2. As reported in the *Times* of 22 Apr 1938, under the heading "Doctrine in Church of England / Criticism by Catholic Advisory Committee," the Council, representing the principal Anglo-Catholic societies and communities, issued a statement the previous day deploring the recent report of the Doctrinal Commission before there was any known consideration of the Doctrinal Commission by the bishops (9).

3. A. G. (Arthur Gabriel) Hebert (1886-1963), a monk of the monastery at Kelham, Nottinghamshire, and a distinguished biblical scholar, was a strong proponent of the Liturgical Movement in the Church of England and author of *Liturgy and Society: The Function of the Church in the Modern World*, published by Faber in 1935. TSE alludes to Hebert's *Memorandum on the Report of the Archbishop's Commission on Christian Doctrine: Resolution on the Council of the Church Union on November 15th, 1938* (London: S.P.C.K., 1939).

4. The "Liberal Manifesto" signed by TSE declared that "in present conditions the Church in England is largely a missionary Church. It must adopt missionary methods, and it must seek to build upon such religious traditions as are available." "The Church is told that it must adopt 'missionary methods' in its worship," the editor complained. "But no hint is given of a definition of this extremely elastic expression" (61).

5. The editor maintained that the treatment of several questions obscures rather than elucidates what the manifesto sought to argue against: "Laxity in discipline towards those who defy the marriage law of the Church," "references to the avoidance of pregnancy," "condonation of breaches of Catholic order," and "appearing to concede everything to the spirit of Protestant liberalism." These matters, he concluded, can amount to"practically nothing; for nothing is to be approved which 'is inconsistent with the maintenance of the historic episcopate'" (61).

A Commentary: That Poetry Is Made with Words[1]

The New English Weekly, 15 (27 Apr 1939) 27-28

The two most dangerous subjects of study for the poet – I think, the only subjects that are always dangerous for him – are aesthetics and psychology. Whether a poet can afford to interest himself in other abstract and philosophical studies is an individual matter: there are conspicuous instances of the good use of such aliment. But abstract studies which turn upon the practice of his own art are a very different matter. The danger of aesthetics is that it may make us conscious of what operates better unconsciously. The danger of psychology is the same; and has particular seriousness when we are concerned with the creation of character. Character composed according to Freudian formulae has all the defects of the synthetic substitute; its actions are tediously predictable; it is always unconvincing, and usually false. The great characters of drama and prose fiction may themselves provide material for study to psychologists; but out of the psychologists' abstractions no character can be put together. The dramatist must study, not psychology, but human beings; and to what he observes, dissects and combines he must add something from himself of which he may not be wholly conscious.

I have been reading *Situation de la poésie* by Jacques and Raissa Maritain, and especially the essay by the former entitled "De la connaissance poétique."[2] Like everything by these authors, it has lucidity and profundity (though I am not sure that Jacques Maritain, whose philosophical output is astonishing, always writes as well as he did). I recommend it warmly to all readers of poetry (I fear, not a large number) who are content to read poetry and do not attempt to write it. I do not object if a few poets read what I am now saying about it, but I advise them against reading the book: it is concerned with matters that they ought to leave alone.

Maritain distinguishes between two types of poet: the craftsman, whose chief conscious concern is formal, and the type whose main occupation is the exploration of consciousness.

> [A]ux époques comme la nôtre il y a une famille de poètes attachés davantage (je dis davantage, je ne dis pas exclusivement) à la *découverte intérieure de soi-même* et au mouvement de prise de conscience de la

> poésie . . . Et il y a une autre famille de poètes attachés davantage à continuer l'*action poétique* elle-même et cette effusion de la voix dont parle David et qui se poursuit d'âge en âge . . .[3]

It is with the first of these types, of which he takes Rimbaud as an exemplar (it must be remembered that he has modern French poetry chiefly in mind) that he is concerned. And I must add that he is concerned with the risks to which are exposed those poets who endeavour to cross *les frontières de l'esprit*.[4]

I do not wish to contest Maritain's analysis of the situation of modern French poetry; but what it has suggested to me is the problem of how the poet ought to work, rather than the consideration of how, in certain circumstances, he has worked. It is true, I think, that poetry, if it is not to be a lifeless repetition of forms, must be constantly exploring "the frontiers of the spirit." But these frontiers are not like the surveys of geographical explorers, conquered once for all and settled. The frontiers of the spirit are more like the jungle which, unless continuously kept under control, is always ready to encroach and eventually obliterate the cultivated area. Our effort is as much to regain, under very different conditions, what was known to men writing at remote times and in alien languages. To do this it is not enough to bring up-to-date the *mise-en-scène*, to substitute the furniture of modern life for the furniture of a previous period, though it must be remembered that no sharp line can be drawn between the inner and the outer, and that this furniture is important in so far as the data of the senses always qualify and give particularity to our emotions: so that an experience in one place cannot be duplicated in another, and a dramatic scene in modern dress and modern speech differs in emotional quality from a similar scene set at another time and place. But emotions themselves are constantly being lost; they can never be merely preserved, but must be always rediscovered; and it is as much this endless battle to regain civilisation, in the midst of continuous outer and inner change of history, as the struggle to conquer the absolutely new, that is the occupation of the poet. Just as history has constantly to be re-written, because everything is gradually altered by the lengthening perspective; so also the poet needs an alert consciousness of the past, in order to realise in its particular concreteness the moment at which he lives.

And this excessive concern with discoveries in consciousness, which Maritain finds characteristic of much modern French poetry, suggests to

me a lack of balance disqualifying such poetry from the first rank. I would make a distinction which Maritain has omitted to make: that between the possible interests of the poet at the times when he is not engaged in writing poetry, and the direction of his attention when writing. A poet who has no other interest than writing poetry, and only lives, experiences, and uses his mind for the purpose of providing himself with something to write about, is in a very bad case; as is also the poet who is only interested in the "interior discovery of himself" and not at all in the occupation of *making* something. Certainly, in the effort of composition, the elaboration of a scheme, the arrangement of detail, the poet can only properly be occupied with how to say it; and must be sufficiently interested in the thing made, for its own sake, to be content if his readers think the poem means something different from what he thinks it means to him. The problem of which he can afford to be most conscious is the problem of what he can do with his language. And this is a fresh problem in every generation: for the point of departure is one's language as it is spoken at one's own time.

Evidently, the evolution of language is due to a great many influences of which contemporary poetry is only one – and perhaps, in our time, poetry is a very diminished influence indeed. Even if the language is deteriorated, the poet must start from where he is, and not from a point at which he believes the language to have been superior. We incline to compare the best of other times, with the worst of our own. It is an error to assume that all changes, in the English language in particular, are for the worse; and it is another error to assume that the worst rot starts from the bottom: from the cinema, for example, or the picture tabloids: I am less alarmed about the decay of English when I read a murder story in the appropriate paper, than when I read the first leader in *The Times*. We need be concerned with decay when we find it at the top; and the increased study of English in schools, and the institution of English as a subject in which universities grant degrees, do not seem necessarily to arrest it. Wherever we start, we come eventually to the problems of education; and what would make me most apprehensive about the future of the language – and that implies the future of sensibility, for what we cease to try to find words for, we cease to be able to feel – would be to observe a decreasing level of literacy amongst poets. A ceaseless care, a passionate and untiring devotion to language, is the first conscious concern of the poet; it demands study of how his language has been written, in both prose and verse, in the past, and sensitiveness to the merits and shortcomings of the way in which it is spoken and written in his

own time. It is to these considerations, rather than any of those raised by M. Maritain, that he might give attention; but to other people, readers of poetry, this book may be recommended.

T. S. E.

NOTES

1. The title is an allusion to a passage in Paul Valéry's essay "Poésie et pensée abstraite" (1939), in which he recounts an exchange reported to him by Edgar Degas. During a conversation with Mallarmé, the painter complained about the difficulty of writing verse, saying that he had many ideas but that he could not do anything with them. Mallarmé replied: "Ce n'est point avec des idées, mon cher Degas, que l'on fait des vers. C'est avec des *mots*" (*Variété V*, Paris: Gallimard, 1944, 141). *Trans*: It is not with ideas, my dear Degas, that one makes verses. It is with *words*.

TSE later referred to Valéry's essay in "The Aims of Poetic Drama" (1949): "Thinking of Mallarmé's remark that poetry is made not with ideas but with words, I am tempted to suggest that drama is made not with ideas but with human beings."

2. *Situation de la poésie* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1938). The volume contains two essays by Raïssa, "Sens et non-sens en poésie" and "Magie, poésie, et mystique," and two by Jacques Maritain, "De la connaissance poétique" and "L'Expérience du poète."

3. *Situation de la poésie*, 80-81. *Trans*: At times like ours there is a family of poets who are more devoted (I say "more" and not "exclusively") to the *inner discovery of oneself* and to the trend of a growing awareness of poetry . . . And there is another family of poets who are more devoted to continuing the *poetic action* itself and the flow of speech which David talks about and which persists from generation to generation . . .

4. Maritain refers the reader to this phrase in his earlier work, *Frontières de la poésie et autres essais* (Paris: Louis Rouart, 1935): "Le rôle capital de Baudelaire et de Rimbaud c'est d'avoir fait passer à l'art moderne les frontières de l'esprit. Mais ces régions sont celles des suprêmes périls, les plus lourds problèmes métaphysiques y tombent sur la poésie, c'est là que se livrent combat les bons et les mauvais anges, et ceux-ci se déguisent en messagers de lumière" (28). *Trans*: The crucial role of Baudelaire and Rimbaud is to have made modern art cross the frontiers of the spirit. But these are regions of the gravest dangers: the most serious metaphysical problems fall upon poetry; it is there that the good and evil angels battle, and the latter disguise themselves as messengers of light.

A Commentary: On Reading Official Reports

The New English Weekly, 15 (11 May 1939) 61-62

One of the most interesting, and in a way one of the most profitable forms of reading supplied by the printing presses today is the Report of any Official Commission. Such a Report is the result of periodical meetings, over a space of years, of a number of very busy people, some of whom are probably members of other commissions considering quite different subjects. They take the testimony of numerous selected witnesses, read and circulate amongst themselves innumerable interim reports, obtain a mass of documentation and evidence; and by some miracle, information and opinion is finally combined, boiled down, and arranged (probably by some one especially active and able member) into a large book which is bound in blue, grey or brown paper. Sometimes, as not long ago with the Report of the Archbishops' Commission on Doctrine,[1] the Report is headlined by the penny press and becomes a best-seller; more often there is reason to believe that it is read by nobody but a few specialists and Civil Servants. And a number of people buy copies which they do not read.

The Reports which are unread, or unreadable, are sometimes the best reading: apart from one's satisfaction in reading something which none of one's acquaintance has thought of reading. Unless they are concerned with affairs in the Church of England, they may, by some obscure channel, lead to something happening. As the members of a commission may not have had the time to get down to fundamentals, and as they may not have enough similarity of outlook to agree if they did; and as their terms of reference generally preclude examination of that network of related problems which embarrasses the philosopher, the assumptions sometimes repay study. The *Report of the Consultative Committee on Secondary Education*, published by the Board of Education for three and sixpence (a price which only a very large sale could render remunerative) is an important document: it embodies the conclusions at which a body of qualified men and women, under the chairmanship of Sir Will Spens, has been able to arrive after five years' work under the conditions assigned to them.[2] The Committee itself considers the recommendations "far-reaching": the question is, how far, under such conditions, the recommendations can reach.[3]

No one could consider himself entitled to criticise the whole report in detail who had not some experience of the operation of the various types of school under consideration, and some knowledge of the human material that goes into them. To the general reader a great many of the particular suggestions seem wise and right – such as the proposals for making the study of Latin more interesting to the intelligent, as distinguished from the merely linguistically gifted pupil (though I do not see why Latin should not be begun before the age of 12, especially considering the admission that the ability to learn by rote flags after the age of 11). But what interested me was the one question which I do not find answered, and which I do not suppose the terms of reference allowed to be raised: what is all this education for? A useful historical account of the English school system, which forms one section of the Report, reminds us how much more difficult this question has become. In the Middle Ages the answer was simple; when only a small number of persons received any schooling, the purpose was to supply the priesthood and the learned professions. This purpose was still pursued in the sixteenth century, though one remembers that in that century an over-supply of university men (the Report gives a pertinent quotation from Francis Bacon) began to constitute a problem.[4] In the nineteenth century the notion of the "liberal education" became dominant, though this "liberal education" served primarily to educate the politicians and the Civil Service, as well as the old learned professions. The Committee insist quite rightly that no sharp distinction between vocational training and liberal education or education for "culture" – ought to be admitted. But in the present age, when we educate everybody, when some culture is supposed to be needed by everybody, when everybody needs a job, and when few can be certain of being able to earn a livelihood by the vocation to which they have been trained, what end have we in view?

One cannot go very far in any direction nowadays without meeting the word "democracy." In the Introduction to this Report we read "Democracy is now challenged, and the duty of citizenship in a democracy renders it essential that all should be taught to understand and to think to the best of their ability" [xxii]. Here we are left, as we almost always are, with that doubtful term "democracy" undefined. But what, we ask in particular, is it that all should be taught to understand? What is it that all should be taught to think about? We should all, no doubt, be taught – what a few struggle painfully to discover for themselves – some glimmering of the meaning of "wisdom," and to think about those things to which our thinking

can make a difference. But to most readers, I fancy, the sentence I have just quoted would immediately suggest understanding, and thinking about politics and economics. But these are matters which few can understand, and fewer still can do anything about: the great majority of people should be taught to understand what they can understand, and to think about those things to which their thinking can make some difference.

Later, we get a kind of definition of education. "Education rather consists in developing specific habits, memories, ideas, forms of manual and mental skill, intellectual interests, moral ideals, and a knowledge, not merely of facts and conclusions, but of methods" (122-23). This is a definition by enumeration, and somewhat miscellaneous. *What* are the habits, memories, and ideas that we consider desirable to inculcate? Of what kinds of intellectual interests are the majority of humanity capable? And what are the moral ideals that we wish to encourage? I am not suggesting that the definition is silly, but only that it does not and cannot get us very far. For to answer the questions into which I have turned it, we need a philosophy of the nature and end of Man: and the exploration of such a philosophy obviously falls outside of the terms of reference of the Commission. The recommendations of such a Commission may all produce admirable results, within a delimited field: my point is simply that their ultimate effect will be contingent upon the philosophy of life that is tacitly, and largely unconsciously accepted by the men and women who have to carry them out.

The conclusion appears to be that any recommendations within a special field like this can, under present conditions in this country, and whatever the individual views of the component members of a Commission, only rest upon an uncertain foundation of Liberalism. If a Commission as a whole had a clear and unanimous opinion as to what education was for, still it would be limited in its recommendations to what the personnel of the Board of Education, the headmasters and headmistresses, the teachers, and the parents are willing to accept without being obliged to think. And it is safe to guess that amongst these innumerable persons there is no majority with any philosophy of life, any political philosophy in the widest and most humane sense, at all. How far such a report can be effective, how far it can even continue to mean anything in the long run, will depend on the insensible movement of forces of national life which may appear superficially to have nothing to do with education. The acceptance of either a Christian or a secularist philosophy would render this – or any

report that could be written today – obsolete. Meanwhile, it is to be hoped that some of the recommendations will be put into effect.

T. S. E.

NOTES

1. TSE refers to *Doctrine in the Church of England: The Report of the Commission on Christian Doctrine Appointed by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York in 1922* (London: S.P.C.K., 1938).

2. *Report of the Consultative Committee on Secondary Education, with Special Reference to Grammar Schools and Technical High Schools* (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1939). Pp. xxxviii + 477. Spens, Master of Corpus Christi, Cambridge, was instrumental in commissioning TSE to deliver the Boutwood Lectures there in Mar 1939, published in October as *The Idea of a Christian Society*.

3. In a prefatory note introducing the committee's work, M. G. Holmes, the Permanent Secretary, stated: "Its recommendations are far-reaching, and their acceptance would involve substantial changes, not only in the public system of education, but also in the administrative arrangements which govern it" (ii).

4. The report quotes a letter from Sir Francis Bacon to King James I, concerning Thomas Sutton's proposal to found a hospital and school in the Charterhouse of Smithfield:

> Concerning the advancement of learning, I do subscribe to the opinion of one of the wisest and greatest men of your kingdom, that for grammar schools there are already too many, and therefore no providence to add, where there is excess. For the great number of schools which are in your Highnesses realm, doth cause a want, and likewise an over-throw; both of them inconvenient, and one of them dangerous; for by means thereof they find want in the country and towns, both of servants for husbandry, and apprentices for trade; and on the other side, there being more scholars bred than the State can prefer and employ, and the active part of that life not bearing a proportion of the preparative, it must needs fall out, that many persons will be bred unfit for other vocations, and unprofitable for that in which they were bred up, which fills the realm full of indigent, idle and wanton people, which are but *materia rerum novarum*. (7)

Correspondence: "That Poetry Is Made with Words"

The New English Weekly, 15 (11 May 1939) 66

Mr. Eliot writes:

My objection to the study of aesthetics by artists was empirical. Mr. Tomlin's rejoinder is based upon an aesthetic theory: namely, that the reader of a poem shares the activity of the poet.[1] This may be a tenable aesthetic theory, but I do not see that the holding of it enables the reader to enjoy or appreciate the poem any better. Mr. Tomlin says that "to appreciate poetry is to come as near as possible to feeling as the poet felt when writing it." This reminds me of the investigator who, after an encounter with a ghost, reported that he "come as near to bein' strangled as made no difference."[2]

NOTES

1. E. W. F. Tomlin's letter to the editor of the *NEW* is in response to TSE's "A Commentary," subtitled "That Poetry Is Made with Words," in the *NEW* of 27 Apr (5.668). "In the first place," writes Tomlin, "if aesthetics and psychology are dangerous for the poet – because they tend to make him 'conscious of what operates better unconsciously' – I do not see why they are not equally dangerous both for the reader of poetry and for the critic – in short, for practically everyone who occupies himself with literature at all. To appreciate poetry is to come as near as possible to feeling as the poet felt when writing it. Now if the experience of the poet is damaged by an attempt to analyse it from an aesthetic or psychological point of view, the same must apply to the experience of the reader. Is not Mr. Eliot assuming a division of the reading public into 'poets' and 'readers of poetry' which is highly artificial? To be capable of appreciating poetry is to be, in a sense, a poet oneself" (66). TSE's reply appeared directly under Tomlin's letter.

2. Source untraced.

Truth and Propaganda

To the Editor of *The New English Weekly*[1]

The New English Weekly, 15 (14 Sept 1939) 291

Sir, – It is surely a mistake to suppose that a nation enters into war knowing quite clearly what it is fighting for. When a nation is the victim of aggression, it enters into war because it cannot help itself; when it is a nation that has pledged itself to help such a victim, it enters into war to fulfil its obligations. As for the aggressors in the present conflict, we may doubt whether the leaders know what, in the long run, they may expect to gain: their people have been instructed to consider itself the victim of injustice.

The clear formulation of our own aims cannot be arrived at without a deal of hard thinking by our best minds over a considerable period of time. There must be many of our own folk (to say nothing of neutrals) who are visited by the suspicion that this expense of spirit, body and natural resources may only lead to another uneasy interim *entre deux guerres*; there may be many amongst the enemy who are inspired by no worthier ambition than that of reversing the situation of 1918. We have the obligation to reassure the one group, and to undeceive the other.

Official Bureaux of Propaganda, whether hastily improvised, or carefully elaborated, and however brilliant the personnel that they muster, have as their job rather the propagation of existing views, than the creation of the valuable views of the future. The ideas which are the most destructive of those of the enemy are not, necessarily, the most popular at home. To undermine fundamental enemy positions, may compel the abandonment of some that many Englishmen cherish. Our position at this moment is, I am sure, the right one. But, if we are to maintain it, we must make a further effort towards rectitude and intelligence. We cannot effectively denounce the enemy without understanding him; we cannot understand him unless we understand ourselves, and our own weaknesses and sins.

The Germans will never understand why we hold opinions in opposition to theirs; if we can understand why they hold theirs, we shall have gained a position. But if we limit our thinking to opposition of Germany, we shall get no further than 1918. In order to get beyond that point, we

must venture on constructive thinking which may be as critical of ourselves as it will be of Germany. And that cannot wait for the cessation of hostilities.

T. S. ELIOT

NOTE

1. TSE appears to write in response to *NEW* editorials in its Aug and early Sept issues on the growing threat of German attack. The first editorial was preceded by a quotation from the first chapter of *The Idea of a Christian Society*, which had been printed separately in the July issue of *Purpose*: "In times of emergency, it may prove in the long run that the problems we have postponed or ignored, rather than those we have failed to attack successfully, will be the ones to plague us. Our difficulties of the moment must always be dealt with somehow; but our permanent difficulties are difficulties of every moment" (*NEW*, 19 July, 19; 5.684). "The nations of the West," the editor wrote in the issue of 31 Aug, "can change their unsound industrial economies into still more unsound economies without great inconvenience or suddenly distasteful change of habits: a propaganda of lies, fear and hatred is all that is required. . . . For though war may be the ultimate test of social endurance, preparation for it is, under the present conditions, the line of least resistance. It is facing up to peace, not to war, that would really strain the nerves of industrial men" (245).

A Commentary

The New English Weekly, 15 (5 Oct 1939) 331-32

Demant's *The Religious Prospect* has already been reviewed in these columns, and what I have to say will therefore not attempt to fulfil the requirements of a review.[1] There is every justification for referring again and again to a book of such capital importance that it has inevitably escaped the notice, as it must inevitably outrun the understanding, of reviewers in the more conspicuous places. This is, furthermore, a kind of book which will provoke different trains of useful thought in various minds, or in the same minds at different moments: so it is desirable that everyone who has done any thinking within the author's field, should at one time or another take it as a text for declarations of his own. I hope therefore that other contributors to the *New English Weekly* will be moved to express their reflections upon what Fr. Demant has here written.

The particular context in which I am impelled to render tribute to the excellence of this book, is that of a brief essay which I had already committed to the printers, under the title of *The Idea of a Christian Society*.[2] Had I had the opportunity of reading *The Religious Prospect*, I cannot say with assurance that I would have withheld my essay altogether; but I am sure that I should have felt obliged to re-write it from beginning to end, so sketchy and superficial does my treatment of "Liberalism" now seem. Having made this admission, I have no further need to refer to my own work.

It would be misleading to call *The Religious Prospect* a "topical book," for that would be to suggest a very limited purpose and application. It is a book which would have been topical, though less intelligible and cogent to most readers, at any time in the last ten years; and it will be topical for many years to come. It is, rather, the kind of book of permanent value from which topical conclusions can be drawn. Though it is definitely and rigorously a work of theology, and not of "Christian Sociology," it is of the greatest value in helping us to answer the questions, "what is the present war about?" and "what are we, or what should we be fighting for?" I cannot attempt here to outline Fr. Demant's argument; I am at the moment only concerned with his view – which I have myself for some time held, but which before

reading this book I did not so well understand – that Liberalism (that combination of "doctrine" and "dogma" which held together during the Nineteenth Century) is something which leads (by what Fr. Demant rather heavily calls *enantiodromia*)[3] to modern totalitarianism, and is indeed a phase without an understanding of which totalitarianism itself cannot be understood.

If one accepts this conclusion, to which the author brings us by a very painstaking course of reasoning, it leads us to important reflections on the curious situation in which we find ourselves today. It means that the catch-words of "democracy" versus "totalitarianism" will not serve the purpose today which the equivalent cries served in 1914. It means not merely that we are trying to fight something positive with something negative, but that we are fighting with the weapon of an idea which may turn in our hands. Now, we have to take great care neither to over-estimate nor to under-estimate the importance of ideas; and not to confuse the plane on which only material forces and their intelligent direction count, with the plane on which ideas are important. To mistake the operation of ideas is to provoke the conclusion that they do not matter at all. Furthermore, we must be prepared to recognise the truth of two propositions which seem at first contradictory. The first is the obvious truth that men use ideas; not only that ideas become strangely altered in the process of being used, but that men are seen to employ them cynically in the service of material ends to which these very ideas have first directed them, and to abandon the ideas when they cease to serve these ends. Anyone considering the alteration of behaviour of Hitler and Stalin towards each other, may be tempted to infer that in our present situation there is only a conflict of material forces, and that the idea, in epistemological terms, is only a transient epiphenomenon. But this is only partly true; it is equally true, in the long run, that ideas use men.

Such an account of the development of Liberalism and Totalitarianism as Fr. Demant puts before us, has not of course anything to do with the question: *who* will win? But it has a great deal to do with the question – in the long run, for humanity in general, the important question: *what* will win? The former is a question of prediction: the latter is a question of prophecy. In the sense in which war is something that starts with the fighting and ends when the fighting stops, we may quite well win this war without ideas. But in that event the statement "we won the war" must be countered with the question "who are we, now that we have won it?" If it should happen that by some hideous metamorphosis we had, in the process

of winning, *become* the Germans – or the Russians – it would be a very hollow triumph indeed, and, in a different sense from that of the old phrase about Greece and Rome, the vanquished would lead the victor captive.[4] It is in this way that ideas use men: so that the only freedom of choice is our freedom to choose the ideas by which we shall be led. The struggle here – it is to this conclusion that *The Religious Prospect* leads me – is that either Germanisation will win, or something that is neither Liberalism nor Totalitarianism: Liberalism is not even a starter in this race.

We begin the present war, it seems, very well equipped in every material way, and probably with more intelligent generalship than twenty-five years ago: but in a state approaching intellectual bankruptcy. It does not appear unreasonable to suggest that if there had been an adequate capital of philosophy twenty-five years ago, the present catastrophe need not have occurred. The only alternative left to us is one to which Fr. Demant's argument seems to me to lead without chance of escape; and it is one which is so shocking, that the book must either be suppressed or – preferably – ignored: it is that we must develop, and try to live by, the Christian Doctrine of Man.[5]

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. V. A. Demant's book (London: Frederick Muller, 1939) was reviewed by a frequent anonymous contributor with the pseudonym "Gens" in the *NEW* of 31 Aug 1939, under the heading "Views and Reviews / Doctrine and Dogma" (253-54). "The author's intention," wrote Gens, "is to consider the future of the Christian religion in the new political circumstances but the greater part of his work is an analysis of totalitarian ideologies, and no serious student of the contemporary conflict ought to miss reading it" (253).

2. TSE wrote in the Preface that he was indebted "to a number of recent books: for instance, . . . to writings of the Revd. V. A. Demant (whose *Religious Prospect* has appeared too recently for me to have made use of it)" (5.683).

3. *enantiodromia*: lit. "running counter to": a concept in the philosophy of Heraclitus employed by Carl Jung: "In the philosophy of Heraclitus it [enantiodromia] is used to designate the play of opposites in the course of events – the view that everything that exists turns into its opposite. . . . I use the term enantiodromia for the emergence of the unconscious opposite in the course of time." *Collected Works of C. G. Jung*, vol 6: *Psychological Types* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1949), 425-26.

4. Horace, *Epistles*, 21.156-67: "Graecia capta ferum victorem cepit, et artes / Intulit agresti Latio"; *trans*: "Greece, the captive, made her savage victor captive, and brought the arts into rustic Latium." *Horace: Satires, Epistles, and Ars Poetica*, ed. and trans. H. R. Fairclough (London: Heinemann, 1929), 408.

5. In the minutes of a meeting of the Moot on 24-25 Sept 1939, TSE reportedly said in anticipation of the war that "it is strange that in 1914 we did not expect a war and were not confused when it came. Now we have been expecting it for some time but are confused when it has come. We are involved in an enormous catastrophe which includes a war. [TSE] mentioned Demant's 'Religious Prospect' as a book which had enormously helped him in the clarification of issues but was terrifying in the magnitude of the task of Christianisation which it implied. Where will people be found even to understand the task?" See *The Moot Papers: Faith, Freedom and Society 1938-1944*, ed. Keith Clements (London: Bloomsbury, 2009), 229-30.

The Idea of a Christian Society

London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1939. Pp. 99.

PREFACE

The three lectures which, with some revision and division, are here printed, were delivered in March 1939 at the invitation of the Master and Fellows of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, on the Boutwood Foundation.[1] I wish to express my thanks to the Master and Fellows for this honour and privilege. The notes I have added while preparing the lectures for press.

My point of departure has been the suspicion that the current terms in which we discuss international affairs and political theory may only tend to conceal from us the real issues of contemporary civilisation. As I have chosen to consider such a large problem, it should be obvious that the following pages can have but little importance by themselves, and that they can only be of use if taken as an individual contribution to a discussion which must occupy many minds for a long time to come. To aim at originality would be an impertinence: at most, this essay can be only an original arrangement of ideas which did not belong to me before and which must become the property of whoever can use them. I owe a great deal to conversations with certain friends whose minds are engrossed by these and similar problems: to make specific acknowledgement might have the effect of imputing to these friends an inconvenient responsibility for my own faults of reasoning. But I owe a great deal also to a number of recent books: for instance, to Mr. Christopher Dawson's *Beyond Politics*, to Mr. Middleton Murry's *The Price of Leadership*, and to writings of the Revd. V. A. Demant (whose *Religious Prospect* has appeared too recently for me to have made use of it). And I am deeply indebted to the works of Jacques Maritain, especially his *Humanisme intégral*.[2]

I trust that the reader will understand from the beginning that this book does not make any plea for a "religious revival" in a sense with which we are already familiar. That is a task for which I am incompetent, and the term seems to me to imply a possible separation of religious feeling from religious thinking which I do not accept – or which I do not find acceptable for our present difficulties. An anonymous writer has recently observed in *The New English Weekly* (July 13, 1939) that

> [M]en have lived by spiritual institutions (of some kind) in every society, and also by political institutions and, indubitably, by economic activities. Admittedly, they have, at different periods, tended to put their trust mainly in one of the three as the real cement of society, but at no time have they wholly excluded the others, because it is impossible to do so.[3]

This is an important, and in its context valuable, distinction; but it should be clear that what I am concerned with here is not spiritual institutions in their separated aspect, but the organisation of values, and a direction of religious thought which must inevitably proceed to a criticism of political and economic systems.

THE IDEA OF A CHRISTIAN SOCIETY

I

The fact that a problem will certainly take a long time to solve, and that it will demand the attention of many minds for several generations, is no justification for postponing the study.[4] And, in times of emergency, it may prove in the long run that the problems we have postponed or ignored, rather than those we have failed to attack successfully, will return to plague us.[5†] Our difficulties of the moment must always be dealt with somehow: but our permanent difficulties are difficulties of every moment. The subject with which I am concerned in the following pages is one to which I am convinced we ought to turn our attention now, if we hope ever to be relieved of the immediate perplexities that fill our minds. It is urgent because it is fundamental; and its urgency is the reason for a person like myself attempting to address, on a subject beyond his usual scope, that public which is likely to read what he writes on other subjects. This is a subject which I could, no doubt, handle much better were I a profound scholar in any of several fields. But I am not writing for scholars, but for people like myself; some defects may be compensated by some advantages; and what one must be judged by, scholar or no, is not particularised knowledge but one's total harvest of thinking, feeling, living and observing human beings.

While the practice of poetry need not in itself confer wisdom or accumulate knowledge, it ought at least to train the mind in one habit of universal value: that of analysing the meanings of words: of those that one employs oneself, as well as the words of others. In using the term "Idea" of

a Christian Society I do not mean primarily a concept derived from the study of any societies which we may choose to call Christian; I mean something that can only be found in an understanding of the end to which a Christian Society, to deserve the name, must be directed. I do not limit the application of the term to a perfected Christian Society on earth; and I do not comprehend in it societies merely because some profession of Christian faith, or some vestige of Christian practice, is retained. My concern with contemporary society, accordingly, will not be primarily with specific defects, abuses or injustices but with the question, what – if any – is the "idea" of the society in which we live? to what end is it arranged?[6*]

The Idea of a Christian Society is one which we can accept or reject; but if we are to accept it, we must treat Christianity with a great deal more *intellectual* respect than is our wont; we must treat it as being for the individual a matter primarily of thought and not of feeling. The consequences of such an attitude are too serious to be acceptable to everybody: for when the Christian faith is not only felt, but thought, it has practical results which may be inconvenient. For to see the Christian faith in this way – and to see it in this way is not necessarily to accept it, but only to understand the real issues – is to see that the difference between the Idea of a Neutral Society (which is that of the society in which we live at present) and the Idea of a Pagan Society (such as the upholders of democracy abominate) is, in the long run, of minor importance. I am not at this moment concerned with the means for bringing a Christian Society into existence; I am not even primarily concerned with making it appear desirable; but I am very much concerned with making clear its difference from the kind of society in which we are now living. Now, to understand the society in which he lives, must be to the interest of every conscious thinking person. The current terms in which we describe our society, the contrasts with other societies by which we – of the "Western Democracies" – eulogise it,[7†] only operate to deceive and stupefy us. To speak of ourselves as a Christian Society, in contrast to that of Germany or Russia, is an abuse of terms. We mean only that we have a society in which no one is penalised for the *formal profession* of Christianity; but we conceal from ourselves the unpleasant knowledge of the real values by which we live. We conceal from ourselves, moreover, the similarity of our society to those which we execrate: for we should have to admit, if we recognised the similarity, that the foreigners do better. I suspect that in our loathing of totalitarianism, there is infused a good deal of admiration for its efficiency.

The political philosopher of the present time, even when he is a Christian himself, is not usually concerned with the possible structure of a Christian state. He is occupied with the possibility of a just State in general, and when he is not an adherent of one or another secular system, is inclined to accept our present system as one to be improved, but not fundamentally altered. Theological writers have more to say that is relevant to my subject. I am not alluding to those writers who endeavour to infuse a vague, and sometimes debased, Christian spirit into the ordinary conduct of affairs; or to those who endeavour, at moments of emergency, to apply Christian principles to particular political situations. Relevant to my subject are the writings of the Christian sociologists[8*] – those writers who criticise our economic system in the light of Christian ethics. Their work consists in proclaiming in general, and demonstrating in particular, the incompatibility of Christian principle and a great deal of our social practice. They appeal to the spirit of justice and humanity with which most of us profess to be inspired; they appeal also to the practical reason, by demonstrating that much in our system is not only iniquitous, but in the long run unworkable and conducive to disaster. Many of the changes which such writers advocate, while deducible from Christian principles, can recommend themselves to any intelligent and disinterested person, and do not require a Christian society to carry them into effect, or Christian belief to render them acceptable: though they are changes which would make it more possible for the individual Christian to live out his Christianity. I am here concerned only secondarily with the changes in economic organisation, and only secondarily with the life of the devout Christian: my primary interest is a change in our social attitude, such a change only as could bring about anything worthy to be called a Christian Society. That such a change would compel changes in our organisation of industry and commerce and financial credit,[9†] that it would facilitate, where it now impedes, the life of devotion for those who are capable of it, I feel certain. But my point of departure is different from that of the sociologists and economists; though I depend upon them for enlightenment, and a test of my Christian Society would be that it should bring about such reforms as they propose; and though the kind of "change of spirit" which can testify for itself by nothing better than a new revivalistic vocabulary, is a danger against which we must be always on guard.

My subject touches also upon that of another class of Christian writer: that of the ecclesiastical controversialists. The subject of Church and State

is, again, not my primary concern. It is not, except at moments which lend themselves to newspaper exploitation, a subject in which the general public takes much interest; and at the moments when the public's interest is aroused, the public is never well enough informed to have the right to an opinion. My subject is a preliminary to the problem of Church and State: it involves that problem in its widest terms and in its most general interest. A usual attitude is to take for granted the existing State, and ask: "What Church?" But before we consider what should be the relation of Church and State, we should first ask: "What State?"[10†] Is there any sense in which we can speak of a "Christian State," any sense in which the State can be regarded as Christian? For even if the nature of the State be such, that we cannot speak of it in its Idea as either Christian or non-Christian, yet is it obvious that actual States may vary to such an extent that the relation of the Church to the State may be anything from overt hostility to a more or less harmonious cooperation of different institutions in the same society. What I mean by the Christian State is not any particular political form, but whatever State is suitable to a Christian Society, whatever State a particular Christian Society develops for itself.[11†] Many Christians there are, I know, who do not believe that a Church in relation to the State is necessary for a Christian Society; and I shall have to give reasons, in later pages, for believing that it is. The point to be made at this stage is that neither the classical English treatises on Church and State, nor contemporary discussion of the subject, give me the assistance that I need. For the earlier treatises, and indeed all up to the present time, assume the existence of a Christian Society; modern writers sometime assume that what we have is a pagan society: and it is just these assumptions that I wish to question.

Your opinion of what can be done for this country in the future, and incidentally your opinion of what ought to be the relations of Church and State, will depend upon the view you take of the contemporary situation. We can abstract three positive historical points: that at which Christians are a new minority in a society of positive pagan traditions – a position which cannot recur within any future with which we are concerned; the point at which the whole society can be called Christian, whether in one body or in a prior or subsequent stage of division into sects; and finally the point at which practising Christians must be recognised as a minority (whether static or diminishing) in a society which has ceased to be Christian. Have we reached the third point? Different observers will give different reports; but I would remark that there are two points of view for

two contexts. The first is that a society has ceased to be Christian when religious practices have been abandoned, when behaviour ceases to be regulated by reference to Christian principle, and when in effect prosperity in this world for the individual or for the group has become the sole conscious aim.[12†] The other point of view, which is less readily apprehended, is that a society has not ceased to be Christian until it has become positively something else. It is my contention that we have to-day a culture which is mainly negative, but which, so far as it is positive, is still Christian. I do not think that it can remain negative, because a negative culture has ceased to be efficient in a world where economic as well as spiritual forces are proving the efficiency of cultures which, even when pagan, are positive; and I believe that the choice before us is between the formation of a new Christian culture, and the acceptance of a pagan one. Both involve radical changes; but I believe that the majority of us, if we could be faced immediately with all the changes which will only be accomplished in several generations, would prefer Christianity.[13†]

I do not expect everyone to agree that our present organisation and temper of society – which proved, in its way, highly successful during the nineteenth century – is "negative": many will maintain that British, French and American civilisation still stands integrally for something positive. And there are others who will insist, that if our culture is negative, then a negative culture is the right thing to have. There are two distinct arguments to be employed in rebuttal: one, an argument of principle, that such a culture is undesirable; the other, a judgment of fact, that it must disappear anyway. The defenders of the present order fail to perceive either how far it is vestigial of a positive Christianity, or how far it has already advanced towards something else.

There is one class of persons to which one speaks with difficulty, and another to which one speaks in vain. The second, more numerous and obstinate than may at first appear, because it represents a state of mind into which we are all prone through natural sloth to relapse, consists of those people who cannot believe that things will ever be very different from what they are at the moment. From time to time, under the influence perhaps of some persuasive writer or speaker, they may have an instant of disquiet or hope; but an invincible sluggishness of imagination makes them go on behaving as if nothing would ever change. Those to whom one speaks with difficulty, but not perhaps in vain, are the persons who believe that great

changes must come, but are not sure either of what is inevitable, or of what is probable, or of what is desirable.

What the Western world has stood for – and by that I mean the terms to which it has attributed sanctity – is "Liberalism" and "Democracy." The two terms are not identical or inseparable. The term "Liberalism" is the more obviously ambiguous, and is now less in favour; but the term "Democracy" is at the height of its popularity. When a term has become so universally sanctified as "democracy" now is, I begin to wonder whether it means anything, in meaning too many things: it has arrived perhaps at the position of a Merovingian Emperor, and wherever it is invoked, one begins to look for the Major of the Palace.[14] Some persons have gone so far as to affirm, as something self-evident, that democracy is the only régime compatible with Christianity; on the other hand, the word is not abandoned by sympathisers with the government of Germany. If anybody ever attacked democracy, I might discover what the word meant. Certainly there is a sense in which Britain and America are more democratic than Germany; but on the other hand, defenders of the totalitarian system can make out a plausible case for maintaining that what we have is not democracy, but financial oligarchy.

Mr. Christopher Dawson considers that "What the non-dictatorial States stand for to-day is not Liberalism but Democracy" [102], and goes on to foretell the advent in these States of a kind of totalitarian democracy.[15] I agree with his prediction,[16†] but if one is considering, not merely the non-dictatorial States, but the societies to which they belong, his statement does less than justice to the extent to which Liberalism still permeates our minds and affects our attitude towards much of life. That Liberalism may be a tendency towards something very different from itself, is a possibility in its nature. For it is something which tends to release energy rather than accumulate it, to relax, rather than to fortify. It is a movement not so much defined by its end, as by its starting point; away from, rather than towards, something definite. Our point of departure is more real to us than our destination; and the destination is likely to present a very different picture when arrived at, from the vaguer image formed in imagination.[17] By destroying traditional social habits of the people, by dissolving their natural collective consciousness into individual constituents, by licensing the opinions of the most foolish, by substituting instruction for education, by encouraging cleverness rather than wisdom, the upstart rather than the qualified, by fostering a notion of *getting on* to which the alternative is a

hopeless apathy, Liberalism can prepare the way for that which is its own negation: the artificial, mechanised or brutalised control which is a desperate remedy for its chaos.

It must be evident that I am speaking of Liberalism in a sense much wider than any which can be fully exemplified by the history of any political party, and equally in a wider sense than any in which it has been used in ecclesiastical controversy. True, the tendency of Liberalism can be more clearly illustrated in religious history than in politics, where principle is more diluted by necessity, where observation is more confused by detail and distracted by reforms each valid within its own limited reference. In religion, Liberalism may be characterised as a progressive discarding of elements in historical Christianity which appear superfluous or obsolete, confounded with practices and abuses which are legitimate objects of attack. But as its movement is controlled rather by its origin than by any goal, it loses force after a series of rejections, and with nothing to destroy is left with nothing to uphold and with nowhere to go. With religious Liberalism, however, I am no more specifically concerned than with political Liberalism: I am concerned with a state of mind which, in certain circumstances, can become universal and infect opponents as well as defenders. And I shall have expressed myself very ill if I give the impression that I think of Liberalism as something simply to be rejected and extirpated, as an evil for which there is a simple alternative. It is a necessary negative element; when I have said the worst of it, that worst comes only to this, that a negative element made to serve the purpose of a positive is objectionable. In the sense in which Liberalism is contrasted with Conservatism, both can be equally repellent: if the former can mean chaos, the latter can mean petrifaction. We are always faced both with the question "what must be destroyed?" and with the question "what must be preserved?" and neither Liberalism nor Conservatism, which are not philosophies and may be merely habits, is enough to guide us.

In the nineteenth century the Liberal Party had its own conservatism, and the Conservative Party had its own liberalism; neither had a political philosophy. To hold a political philosophy is in fact not the function of a political, that is, a Parliamentary party: a party with a political philosophy is a revolutionary party. The politics of political parties is not my concern. Nor am I concerned with the politics of a revolutionary party. If a revolutionary party attains its true end, its political philosophy will, by a process of growth, become that of a whole culture; if it attains its more facile end, its political philosophy will be that of a dominant class or group, in a society

in which the majority will be passive, and the minority oppressed. But a political philosophy is not merely a formalised system set forth by a theorist. The permanent value of such treatises as Aristotle's *Politics* and *Poetics* is found at the opposite extreme to anything that we can call *doctrinaire*. Just as his views on dramatic poetry were derived from a study of the existing works of Attic drama, so his political theory was founded on a perception of the unconscious aims implicit in Athenian democracy at its best. His limitations are the condition of his universality; and instead of ingenious theories spun out of his head, he wrote studies full of universal wisdom. Thus, what I mean by a political philosophy is not merely even the conscious formulation of the ideal aims of a people, but the substratum of collective temperament, ways of behaviour and unconscious values which provide the material for the formulation. What we are seeking is not a programme for a party, but a way of life for a people: it is this which totalitarianism has sought partly to revive, and partly to impose by force upon its peoples. Our choice now is not between one abstract form and another, but between a pagan, and necessarily stunted culture, and a religious, and necessarily imperfect culture.

The attitudes and beliefs of Liberalism are destined to disappear, are already disappearing. They belong to an age of free exploitation which has passed; and our danger now is, that the term may come to signify for us only the disorder the fruits of which we inherit, and not the permanent value of the negative element. Out of Liberalism itself come philosophies which deny it. We do not proceed, from Liberalism to its apparent end of authoritarian democracy, at a uniform pace in every respect. There are so many centres of it – Britain, France, America and the Dominions – that the development of western society must proceed more slowly than that of a compact body like Germany, and its tendencies are less apparent. Furthermore, those who are the most convinced of the necessity of *étatisme*[18] as a control of some activities of life, can be the loudest professors of libertarianism in others, and insist upon the preserves of "private life" in which each man may obey his own convictions or follow his own whim: while imperceptibly this domain of "private life" becomes smaller and smaller, and may eventually disappear altogether. It is possible that a wave of terror of the consequences of depopulation might lead to legislation having the effect of compulsory breeding.[19]

If, then, Liberalism disappears from the philosophy of life of a people, what positive is left? We are left only with the term "democracy," a term

which, for the present generation, still has a Liberal connotation of "freedom." But totalitarianism can retain the terms "freedom" and "democracy" and give them its own meaning:[20*] and its right to them is not so easily disproved as minds inflamed by passion suppose. We are in danger of finding ourselves with nothing to stand for except a *dislike* of everything maintained by Germany and/or Russia: a dislike which, being a compost of newspaper sensations and prejudice, can have two results, at the same time, which appear at first incompatible.[21†] It may lead us to reject possible improvements, because we should owe them to the example of one or both of these countries; and it may equally well lead us to be mere imitators *à rebours*,[22*] in making us adopt uncritically almost any attitude which a foreign nation rejects.

We are living at present in a kind of doldrums between opposing winds of doctrine, in a period in which one political philosophy has lost its cogency for behaviour, though it is still the only one in which public speech can be framed. This is very bad for the English language; it is this disorder (for which we are all to blame)[23†] and not individual insincerity, which is responsible for the hollowness of many political and ecclesiastical utterances. You have only to examine the mass of newspaper leading articles, the mass of political exhortation, to appreciate the fact that good prose cannot be written by a people without convictions. The fundamental[24†] objection to fascist doctrine,[25*] the one which we conceal from ourselves because it might condemn ourselves as well, is that it is pagan. There are other objections too, in the political and economic sphere, but they are not objections that we can make with dignity until we set our own affairs in order. There are still other objections, to oppression and violence and cruelty, but however strongly we feel, these are objections to means and not to ends. It is true that we sometimes use the word "pagan," and in the same context refer to ourselves as "Christian." But we always dodge the real issue. Our newspapers have done all they could with the red herring of the "German national religion,"[26*] an eccentricity which is after all no odder than some cults held in Anglo-Saxon countries: this "German national religion" is comforting in that it persuades us that *we* have a Christian civilisation; it helps to disguise the fact that our aims, like Germany's, are materialistic.[27] And the last thing we should like to do would be to examine the "Christianity" which, in such contexts as this, we say we keep.

If we have got so far as accepting the belief that the only alternative to a progressive and insidious adaptation to totalitarian worldliness for which the pace is already set, is to aim at a Christian society, we need to consider both what kind of a society we have at this time, and what a Christian society would be like. We should also be quite sure of what we want: if your real ideals are those of materialistic efficiency, then the sooner you know your own mind, and face the consequences, the better. Those who, either complacently or despairingly, suppose that the aim of Christianisation is chimerical, I am not here attempting to convert. To those who realise what a well organised pagan society would mean for us, there is nothing to say. But it is as well to remember that the imposition of a pagan theory of the State does not necessarily mean a wholly pagan society. A compromise between the theory of the State and the tradition of society exists in Italy, a country which is still mainly agricultural and Catholic. The more highly industrialised the country, the more easily a materialistic philosophy will flourish in it, and the more deadly that philosophy will be. Britain has been highly industrialised longer than any other country. And the tendency of unlimited industrialism is to create bodies of men and women – of all classes – detached from tradition, alienated from religion, and susceptible to mass suggestion: in other words, a mob. And a mob will be no less a mob if it is well fed, well clothed, well housed, and well disciplined.

The Liberal notion that religion was a matter of private belief and of conduct in private life, and that there is no reason why Christians should not be able to accommodate themselves to any world which treats them good-naturedly, is becoming less and less tenable. This notion would seem to have become accepted gradually, as a false inference from the subdivision of English Christianity into sects, and the happy results of universal toleration. The reason why members of different communions have been able to rub along together, is that in the greater part of the ordinary business of life they have shared the same assumptions about behaviour. When they have been wrong, they have been wrong together. We have less excuse than our ancestors for un-Christian conduct, because the growth of an un-Christian society about us, its more obvious intrusion upon our lives, has been breaking down the comfortable distinction between public and private morality. The problem of leading a Christian life in a non-Christian society is now very present to us, and it is a very different problem from that of the accommodation between an Established Church and dissenters.

It is not merely the problem of a minority in a society of *individuals* holding an alien belief. It is the problem constituted by our implication in a network of institutions from which we cannot dissociate ourselves: institutions the operation of which appears no longer neutral, but non-Christian. And as for the Christian who is not conscious of his dilemma – and he is in the majority – he is becoming more and more de-Christianised by all sorts of unconscious pressure: paganism holds all the most valuable advertising space. Anything like Christian traditions transmitted from generation to generation within the family must disappear, and the small body of Christians will consist entirely of adult recruits. I am saying nothing at this point that has not been said before by others, but it is relevant. I am not concerned with the problem of Christians as a persecuted minority. When the Christian is treated as an enemy of the State, his course is very much harder, but it is simpler. I am concerned with the dangers to the tolerated minority; and in the modern world, it may turn out that the most intolerable thing for Christians is to be tolerated.

To attempt to make the prospect of a Christian society immediately attractive to those who see no prospect of deriving direct personal benefit from it, would be idle; even the majority of professing Christians may shrink from it. No scheme for a change of society can be made to appear immediately palatable, except by falsehood, until society has become so desperate that it will accept any change. A Christian society only becomes acceptable after you have fairly examined the alternatives. We might, of course, merely sink into an apathetic decline: without faith, and therefore without faith in ourselves; without a philosophy of life, either Christian or pagan; and without art. Or we might get a "totalitarian democracy," different but having much in common with other pagan societies, because we shall have changed step by step in order to keep pace with them: a state of affairs in which we shall have regimentation and conformity, without respect for the needs of the individual soul; the puritanism of a hygienic morality[28*] in the interest of efficiency; uniformity of opinion through propaganda, and art only encouraged when it flatters the official doctrines of the time. To those who can imagine, and are therefore repelled by, such a prospect, one can assert that the only possibility of control and balance is a religious control and balance; that the only hopeful course for a society which would thrive and continue its creative activity in the arts of civilisation, is to become Christian. That prospect involves, at least, discipline,

inconvenience and discomfort: but here as hereafter the alternative to hell is purgatory.[29*]

II

My thesis has been, simply, that a liberalised or negative condition of society must either proceed into a gradual decline of which we can see no end, or (whether as a result of catastrophe or not) reform itself into a positive shape which is likely to be effectively secular. We need not assume that this secularism will approximate closely to any system in the past or to any that can now be observed in order to be apprehensive about it: the Anglo-Saxons display a capacity for *diluting* their religion, probably in excess of that of any other race. But unless we are content with the prospect of one or the other of these issues, the only possibility left is that of a positive Christian society. The third will only commend itself to those who agree in their view of the present situation, and who can see that a thoroughgoing secularism would be objectionable, in its consequences, even to those who attach no positive importance to the survival of Christianity for its own sake.

I am not investigating the possible lines of action by which such a Christian society could be brought into being. I shall confine myself to a slight outline of what I conceive to be essential features of this society, bearing in mind that it can neither be mediaeval in form, nor be modelled on the seventeenth century or any previous age. In what sense, if any, can we speak of a "Christian State"? I would ask to be allowed to use the following working distinctions: the Christian State, the Christian Community, and the Community of Christians,[30*] as elements of the Christian Society.

I conceive then of the Christian State as of the Christian Society under the aspect of legislation, public administration, legal tradition, and form. Observe that at this point I am not approaching the problem of Church and State except with the question: with what kind of State can the Church have a relation? By this I mean a relation of the kind which has hitherto obtained in England; which is neither merely reciprocal tolerance, nor a Concordat.[31] The latter seems to me merely a kind of compromise, of doubtful durability, resting on a dubious division of authority, and often a popular division of loyalty; a compromise which implies perhaps a hope on the part of the rulers of the State that their rule will outlast Christianity, and a faith on the part of the Church that it will survive any particular form of secular organisation. A relation between Church and State such as

is, I think, implied in our use of the term, implies that the State is in some sense Christian. It must be clear that I do not mean by a Christian State one in which the rulers are chosen because of their qualifications, still less their eminence, as Christians. A regiment of Saints is apt to be too uncomfortable to last. I do not deny that some advantages may accrue from persons in authority, in a Christian State, being Christians. Even in the present conditions, that sometimes happens; but even if, in the present conditions, *all* persons in positions of the highest authority were devout and orthodox Christians, we should not expect to see very much difference in the conduct of affairs. The Christian and the unbeliever do not, and cannot, behave very differently in the exercise of office; for it is the general ethos of the people they have to govern, not their own piety, that determines the behaviour of politicians. One may even accept F. S. Oliver's affirmation – following Buelow, following Disraeli – that real statesmen are inspired by nothing else than their instinct for power and their love of country.[32] It is not primarily the Christianity of the statesmen that matters, but their being confined, by the temper and traditions of the people which they rule, to a Christian framework within which to realise their ambitions and advance the prosperity and prestige of their country. They may frequently perform un-Christian acts; they must never attempt to defend their actions on un-Christian principles.

The rulers and would-be rulers of modern states may be divided into three kinds, in a classification which cuts across the division of fascism, communism and democracy. There are such as have taken over or adapted some philosophy, as of Marx or Aquinas. There are those who, combining invention with eclecticism have devised their own philosophy – not usually distinguished by either the profundity or the consistency one expects of a philosophy of life – and there are those who pursue their tasks without appearing to have any philosophy at all. I should not expect the rulers of a Christian State to be philosophers, or to be able to keep before their minds at every moment of decision the maxim that the life of virtue is the purpose of human society – *virtuosa . . . vita est congregationis humanae finis*;[33] but they would neither be self-educated, nor have been submitted in their youth merely to that system of miscellaneous or specialised instruction which passes for education: they would have received a Christian education. The purpose of a Christian education would not be merely to make men and women pious Christians: a system which aimed too rigidly at this end alone would become only obscurantist. A Christian education would

primarily train people to be able to think in Christian categories, though it could not compel belief and would not impose the necessity for insincere profession of belief. What the rulers believed, would be less important than the beliefs to which they would be obliged to conform. And a skeptical or indifferent statesman, working within a Christian frame, might be more effective than a devout Christian statesman obliged to conform to a secular frame. For he would be required to design his policy for the government of a Christian Society.

The relation of the Christian State, the Christian Community, and the Community of Christians, may be looked at in connexion with the problem of *belief*. Among the men of state, you would have as a minimum, conscious conformity of behaviour. In the Christian Community that they ruled, the Christian faith would be ingrained, but it requires, as a minimum, only a largely unconscious behaviour; and it is only from the much smaller number of conscious human beings, the Community of Christians, that one would expect a conscious Christian life on its highest social level.

For the great mass of humanity whose attention is occupied mostly by their direct relation to the soil, or the sea, or the machine, and to a small number of persons, pleasures and duties, two conditions are required. The first is that, as their capacity for *thinking* about the objects of faith is small, their Christianity may be almost wholly realised in behaviour: both in their customary and periodic religious observances, and in a traditional code of behaviour towards their neighbours. The second is that, while they should have some perception of how far their lives fall short of Christian ideals, their religious and social life should form for them a natural whole, so that the difficulty of behaving as Christians should not impose an intolerable strain. These two conditions are really the same differently stated; they are far from being realised to-day.

The traditional unit of the Christian Community in England is the parish. I am not here concerned with the problem of how radically this system must be modified to suit a future state of things. The parish is certainly in decay, from several causes of which the least cogent is the division into sects: a much more important reason is urbanisation – in which I am including also *sub*-urbanisation, and all the causes and effects of urbanisation. How far the parish must be superseded will depend largely upon our view of the necessity of accepting the causes which tend to destroy it. In any case, the parish will serve my purpose as an example of community unit. For this unit must not be solely religious, and not solely social; nor should

the individual be a member of two separate, or even overlapping units, one religious and the other social. The unitary community should be religious-social, and it must be one in which all classes, if you have classes, have their centre of interest. That is a state of affairs which is no longer wholly realised except in very primitive tribes indeed.

It is a matter of concern not only in this country, but has been mentioned with concern by the late Supreme Pontiff, speaking not of one country but of all civilised countries, that the masses of the people have become increasingly alienated from Christianity.[34] In an industrialised society like that of England, I am surprised that the people retains as much Christianity as it does. For the great majority of the people – and I am not here thinking of social classes, but of intellectual strata – religion must be primarily a matter of behaviour and habit, must be integrated with its social life, with its business and its pleasures; and the specifically religious emotions must be a kind of extension and sanctification of the domestic and social emotions. Even for the most highly developed and conscious individual, living in the world, a consciously Christian direction of thought and feeling can only occur at particular moments during the day and during the week, and these moments themselves recur in consequence of formed habits; to be conscious, without remission, of a Christian and a non-Christian alternative at moments of choice, imposes a very great strain. The mass of the population, in a Christian society, should not be exposed to a way of life in which there is too sharp and frequent a conflict between what is easy for them or what their circumstances dictate and what is Christian. The compulsion to live in such a way that Christian behaviour is only possible in a restricted number of situations, is a very powerful force against Christianity; for behaviour is as potent to affect belief, as belief to affect behaviour.

I am not presenting any idyllic picture of the rural parish, either present or past, in taking as a norm, the idea of a small and mostly self-contained group attached to the soil and having its interests centred in a particular place, with a kind of unity which may be designed, but which also has to grow through generations. It is the idea, or ideal, of a community small enough to consist of a nexus of direct personal relationships, in which all iniquities and turpitudes will take the simple and easily appreciable form of wrong relations between one person and another. But at present not even the smallest community, unless so primitive as to present objectionable features of another kind, is so simplified as this; and I am not advocating any complete reversion to any earlier state of things, real or idealised. The

example appears to offer no solution to the problem of industrial, urban and suburban life which is that of the majority of the population. In its religious organisation, we may say that Christendom has remained fixed at the stage of development suitable to a simple agricultural and piscatorial society, and that modern material organisation – or if "organisation" sounds too complimentary, we will say "complication" – has produced a world for which Christian social forms are imperfectly adapted. Even if we agree on this point, there are two simplifications of the problem which are suspect. One is to insist that the only salvation for society is to return to a simpler mode of life, scrapping all the constructions of the modern world that we can bring ourselves to dispense with. This is an extreme statement of the neo-Ruskinian view, which was put forward with much vigour by the late A. J. Penty.[35] When one considers the large amount of determination in social structure, this policy appears Utopian: if such a way of life ever comes to pass, it will be – as may well happen in the long run – from natural causes, and not from the moral will of men. The other alternative is to accept the modern world as it is and simply try to adapt Christian social ideals to it. The latter resolves itself into a mere doctrine of expediency; and is a surrender of the faith that Christianity itself can play any part in shaping social forms. And it does not require a Christian attitude to perceive that the modern system of society has a great deal in it that is inherently bad.

We now reach a point from which there is a course that I do not propose to take; and as it is an obvious course, and to some may appear to be the main thoroughfare, I ought to explain as briefly as I can why I do not propose to take it. We are accustomed to make the distinction (though in practice we are frequently confused) between the evil which is present in human nature at all times and in all circumstances, and the evil in particular institutions at particular times and places, and which, though attributable to some individuals rather than others, or traceable to the cumulative deflection of the wills of many individuals throughout several generations, cannot at any moment be fastened upon particular persons. If we make the mistake of assuming that this kind of evil results from causes wholly beyond the human will, then we are liable to believe that only other non-human causes can change it. But we are equally likely to take another line, and to place all our hopes in the replacement of our machinery. Nevertheless, the lines of thought, which I am doing no more than indicate, for the realisation of a Christian society, must lead us inevitably to face such problems as

the hypertrophy of the motive of Profit into a social ideal, the distinction between the *use* of natural resources and their exploitation, the use of labour and its exploitation, the advantages unfairly accruing to the trader in contrast to the primary producer, the misdirection of the financial machine, the iniquity of usury, and other features of a commercialised society which must be scrutinised on Christian principles. In ignoring these problems, I am not taking refuge in a mere admission of incompetence, though the suspicion that I am incompetent might operate against the acceptance of any observations that I made; nor am I simply resigning them to the supposed technical authorities, for that would be a surrender of the primacy of ethics. My point is that, while there is a considerable measure of agreement that certain things are wrong, the question of how they should be put right is so extremely controversial, that any proposal is immediately countered by a dozen others; and in this context, attention would be concentrated on the imperfections of my proposals, and away from my main concern, the end to be attained. I confine myself therefore to the assertion, which I think few will dispute, that a great deal of the machinery of modern life is merely a sanction for un-Christian aims, that it is not only hostile to the conscious pursuit of the Christian life in the world by the few, but to the maintenance of any Christian society *of* the world. We must abandon the notion that the Christian should be content with freedom of cultus, and with suffering no worldly disabilities on account of his faith. However bigoted the announcement may sound, the Christian can be satisfied with nothing less than a Christian organisation of society – which is not the same thing as a society consisting exclusively of devout Christians. It would be a society in which the natural end of man – virtue and well-being in community – is acknowledged for all, and the supernatural end – beatitude – for those who have the eyes to see it.

I do not wish, however, to abandon my previous point, that a Christian community is one in which there is a unified religious-social code of behaviour. It should not be necessary for the ordinary individual to be wholly conscious of what elements are distinctly religious and Christian, and what are merely social and identified with his religion by no logical implication. I am not requiring that the community should contain more "good Christians" than one would expect to find under favourable conditions. The religious life of the people would be largely a matter of behaviour and conformity; social customs would take on religious sanctions; there would no doubt be many irrelevant accretions and local emphases and

observances – which, if they went too far in eccentricity or superstition, it would be the business of the Church to correct, but which otherwise could make for social tenacity and coherence. The traditional way of life of the community would not be imposed by law, would have no sense of outward constraint, and would not be the result merely of the sum of individual belief and understanding.

The rulers, I have said, will, *qua* rulers, accept Christianity not simply as their own faith to guide their actions, but as the system under which they are to govern. The people will accept it as a matter of behaviour and habit. In the abstraction which I have erected, it is obvious that the tendency of the State is toward expediency that may become cynical manipulation, the tendency of the people toward intellectual lethargy and superstition. We need therefore what I have called "the Community of Christians," by which I mean, not local groups, and not the Church in any one of its senses, unless we call it "the Church within the Church." These will be the consciously and thoughtfully practising Christians, especially those of intellectual and spiritual superiority. It will be remarked at once that this category bears some resemblance to what Coleridge has called "the clerisy" – a term recently revived, and given a somewhat different application, by Mr. Middleton Murry.[36] I think that my "Community of Christians" is somewhat different from either use of the term "clerisy." The content which Coleridge gave to the term, certainly, has been somewhat voided by time. You will remember that Coleridge included in the extension of meaning three classes: the universities and great schools of learning, the parochial pastorate, and the local schoolmasters. Coleridge's conception of the clerical function, and of its relation to education was formed in a world that has since been strangely altered: his insistence that clergy should be "in the rule married men and heads of families" and his dark references to a foreign ecclesiastical power, now sound merely quaint;[37] and he quite failed to recognise the enormous value which monastic orders can and should have in the community.[38] The term which I use is meant to be at once wider and more restricted. In the field of education it is obvious that the conformity to Christian belief and the possession of Christian knowledge, can no longer be taken for granted; nor can the supremacy of the theologian be either expected or imposed in the same way. In any future Christian society that I can conceive, the educational system will be formed according to Christian presuppositions of what education – as distinct from mere instruction – is for;[39*] but the personnel will inevitably be mixed: one may even hope that the mixture may

be a benefit to its intellectual vitality. The mixture will include persons of exceptional ability who may be indifferent or disbelieving; there will be room for a proportion of other persons professing other faiths than Christianity. The limitations imposed upon such persons would be similar to those imposed by social necessity upon the politician who, without being able to believe the Christian faith, yet has abilities to offer in the public service, with which his country could ill dispense.

It would be still more rash of me to embark upon a criticism of the contemporary ideals of education, than it is for me to venture to criticise politics; but it is not impertinent to remark upon the close relationship of educational theory and political theory. One would indeed be surprised to find the educational system and the political system of any country in complete disaccord; and what I have said about the negative character of our political philosophy should suggest a parallel criticism of our education, not as it is found in practice here or there, but in the assumptions about the nature and purpose of education which tend to affect practice throughout the country.[40] And I do not need to remind you that a pagan totalitarian government is hardly likely to leave education to look after itself, or to refrain from interfering with the traditional methods of the oldest institutions: of some of the results abroad of such interference on the most irrelevant grounds we are quite well aware. There is likely to be, everywhere, more and more pressure of circumstance towards adapting educational ideals to political ideals, and in the one as in the other sphere, we have only to choose between a higher and a lower rationalisation. In a Christian Society education must be religious, not in the sense that it will be administered by ecclesiastics, still less in the sense that it will exercise pressure, or attempt to instruct everyone in theology, but in the sense that its aims will be directed by a Christian philosophy of life. It will no longer be merely a term comprehending a variety of unrelated subjects undertaken for special purposes or for none at all.

My Community of Christians, then, in contrast to Coleridge's clerisy, could hardly include the whole of the teaching body. On the other hand, it would include, besides many of the laity engaged in various occupations, many, but not all, of the clergy. A national clergy must of course include individual priests of different intellectual types and levels; and, as I suggested before, belief has a vertical as well as a horizontal measurement: to answer fully the question "What does *A* believe?" one must know enough about *A* to have some notion of the level on which he is capable of

believing anything. The Community of Christians – a body of very nebulous outline – would contain both clergy and laity of superior intellectual and/or spiritual gifts.[41]* And it would include some of those who are ordinarily spoken of, not always with flattering intention, as "intellectuals."

That culture and the cultivation of philosophy and the arts should be confined to the cloister would be a decline into a Dark Age that I shudder to contemplate; on the other hand the segregation of lay "intellectuals" into a world of their own, which very few ecclesiastics or politicians either penetrate or have any curiosity about, is not a progressive situation either. A good deal of waste seems to me to occur through pure ignorance; a great deal of ingenuity is expended on half-baked philosophies, in the absence of any common background of knowledge. We write for our friends – most of whom are also writers – or for our pupils – most of whom are going to be writers; or we aim at a hypothetical popular audience which we do not know and which perhaps does not exist. The result in any case, is apt to be a refined provincial crudity. What are the most fruitful social conditions for the production of works of the first order, philosophical, literary or in the other arts, is perhaps one of those topics of controversy more suitable for conversation than for writing about. There may perhaps be no one set of conditions most suitable for the efflorescence of all these activities; it is equally possible that the necessary conditions may vary from one country and civilisation to another. The régime of Louis XIV or of the Tudors and Stuarts could hardly be called libertarian; on the other hand, the rule of authoritarian governments in our time does not appear conducive to a renascence of the arts. Whether the arts flourish best in a period of growth and expansion, or in one of decay, is a question that I cannot answer. A strong and even tyrannous government may do no harm, so long as the sphere of its control is strictly limited; so long as it limits itself to restricting the liberties, without attempting to influence the minds, of its subjects; but a régime of unlimited demagogy appears to be stultifying. I must restrict my consideration to the position of the arts in our present society, and to what it should be in such a future society as I envisage.

It may be that the conditions unfavourable to the arts today lie too deep and are too extensive to depend upon the differences between one form of government and another; so that the prospect before us is either of slow continuous decay or of sudden extinction. You cannot, in any scheme for the reformation of society, aim directly at a condition in which the arts will flourish: these activities are probably by-products for which we cannot

deliberately arrange the conditions. On the other hand, their decay may always be taken as a symptom of some social ailment to be investigated. The future of art and thought in a democratic society does not appear any brighter than any other, unless democracy is to mean something very different from anything actual. It is not that I would defend a moral censorship: I have always expressed strong objections to the suppression of books possessing, or even laying claim to literary merit.[42] But what is more insidious than any censorship, is the steady influence which operates silently in any mass society organised for profit, for the depression of standards of art and culture. The increasing organisation of advertisement and propaganda – or the influencing of masses of men by any means except through their intelligence – is all against them. The economic system is against them; the chaos of ideals and confusion of thought in our large scale mass education is against them; and against them also is the disappearance of any class of people who recognise public and private responsibility of patronage of the best that is made and written. At a period in which each nation has less and less "culture" for its own consumption, all are making furious efforts to export their culture, to impress upon each other their achievements in arts which they are ceasing to cultivate or understand. And just as those who should be the intellectuals regard theology as a special study, like numismatics or heraldry, with which they need not concern themselves, and theologians observe the same indifference to literature and art, as special studies which do not concern *them*, so our political classes regard both fields as territories of which they have no reason to be ashamed of remaining in complete ignorance. Accordingly the more serious authors have a limited, and even provincial audience, and the more popular write for an illiterate and uncritical mob.

You cannot expect continuity and coherence in politics, you cannot expect reliable behaviour on fixed principles persisting through changed situations, unless there is an underlying political philosophy: not of a party, but of the nation. You cannot expect continuity and coherence in literature and the arts, unless you have a certain uniformity of culture,[43*] expressed in education by a settled, though not rigid agreement as to what everyone should know to some degree, and a positive distinction – however undemocratic it may sound – between the educated and the uneducated. I observed in America, that with a very high level of intelligence among undergraduates, progress was impeded by the fact that one could never assume that any two, unless they had been at the same school under the

influence of the same masters at the same moment, had studied the same subjects or read the same books, though the number of subjects in which they had been instructed was surprising. Even with a smaller amount of total information, it might have been better if they had read fewer, but the same books. In a negative liberal society you have no agreement as to there being any body of knowledge which any educated person should have acquired at any particular stage: the idea of wisdom disappears, and you get sporadic and unrelated experimentation. A nation's system of education is much more important than its system of government; only a proper system of education can unify the active and the contemplative life, action and speculation, politics and the arts. But "education," said Coleridge, "is to be reformed, and defined as synonymous with instruction" [66]. This revolution has been effected: to the populace education *means* instruction. The next step to be taken by the clericalism of secularism, is the inculcation of the political principles approved by the party in power.

I may seem to have wandered from my course, but it seemed necessary to mention the capital responsibility of education in the condition which we find or anticipate: a state secularised, a community turned into a mob, and a clerisy disintegrated. The obvious secularist solution for muddle is to subordinate everything to political power: and in so far as this involves the subordination of the money-making interests to those of the nation as a whole, it offers some immediate, though perhaps illusory relief: a people feels at least more dignified if its hero is the statesman however unscrupulous, or the warrior however brutal, rather than the financier. But it also means the confinement of the clergy to a more and more restricted field of activity, the subduing of free intellectual speculation, and the debauching of the arts by political criteria. It is only in a society with a religious basis – which is not the same thing as an ecclesiastical despotism – that you can get the proper harmony and tension, for the individual or for the community.

In any Christian society which can be imagined for the future – in what M. Maritain calls a *pluralist* society[44] – my "Community of Christians" cannot be a body of the definite vocational outline of the "clerisy" of Coleridge: which, viewed in a hundred years' perspective, appears to approximate to the rigidity of a caste. The Community of Christians is not an organisation, but a body of indefinite outline; composed of both clergy and laity, of the more conscious, more spiritually and intellectually developed of both. It will be their identity of belief and aspiration, their background of a common system of education and a common culture, which will enable

them to influence and be influenced by each other, and collectively to form the conscious mind and the conscience of the nation.

The Spirit descends in different ways, and I cannot foresee any future society in which we could classify Christians and non-Christians simply by their professions of belief, or even, by any rigid code, by their behaviour. In the present ubiquity of ignorance, one cannot but suspect that many who call themselves Christians do not understand what the word means, and that some who would vigorously repudiate Christianity are more Christian than many who maintain it. And perhaps there will always be individuals who, with great creative gifts of value to mankind, and the sensibility which such gifts imply, will yet remain blind, indifferent, or even hostile. That must not disqualify them from exercising the talents they have been given.

The foregoing sketch of a Christian society, from which are omitted many details that will be considered essential, could not stand even as a rough sketch – an *ébauche* – without some treatment, according to the same economy, of the relation of Church and State in such a society. So far, nothing has suggested the existence of an organised Church at all. But the State would remain under the necessity of respecting Christian principles, only so far as the habits and feelings of the people were not too suddenly affronted or too violently outraged, or so far as it was deterred by any univocal protest of the most influential of the Community of Christians. The State is Christian only negatively; its Christianity is a reflection of the Christianity of the society which it governs. We have no safeguard against its proceeding, from un-Christian acts, to action on implicitly un-Christian principles, and thence to action on avowedly un-Christian principles. We have no safeguard for the purity of our Christianity; for, as the State may pass from expediency to lack of principle, and as the Christian Community may sink into torpor, so the Community of Christians may be debilitated by group or individual eccentricity and error. So far, we have only a society such that it can have a significant relation to a Church; a relationship which is not of hostility or even of accommodation. And this relation is so important that without discussing it we have not even shown the assembled skeleton of a Christian Society, we have only exposed the unarticulated bones.

III

I have spoken of this essay as being, in one aspect, a kind of preface to the problem of Church and State; it is as well, at this point, to indicate its

prefatorial limitations. The problem is one of concern to every Christian country – that is, to every possible form of Christian society. It will take a different form according to the traditions of that society – Roman, Orthodox, or Lutheran. It will take still another form in those countries, obviously the United States of America and the Dominions, where the variety of races and religious communions represented appears to render the problem insoluble. Indeed, for these latter countries the problem might not appear even to exist; these countries might appear to be committed from their origin to a neutral form of society. I am not ignoring the possibility of a neutral society, under such conditions, persisting indefinitely. But I believe that if these countries are to develop a positive culture of their own, and not remain merely derivatives of Europe, they can only proceed either in the direction of a pagan or of a Christian society. I am not suggesting that the latter alternative must lead to the forcible suppression, or to the complete disappearance of dissident sects; still less, I hope, to a superficial union of Churches under an official exterior, a union in which theological differences would be so belittled that its Christianity might become wholly bogus. But a positive culture must have a positive set of values, and the dissentients must remain marginal, tending to make only marginal contributions.

However dissimilar the local conditions, therefore, this question of Church and State is of importance everywhere. Its actuality in Europe may make it appear all the more remote in America, just as its actuality in England raises a number of considerations remote to the rest of Europe. But if what I say in the following pages has its direct application only in England, it is not because I am thinking of local matters without relation to Christendom as a whole. It is partly that I can only discuss profitably the situations with which I am most familiar, and partly that a more generalised consideration would appear to deal only with figments and fancies. I have therefore limited my field to the possibility of a Christian society in England, and in speaking of Church and State it is the Anglican Church that I have in mind. But it must be remembered that such terms as "Establishment" and "Established Church" can have a wider meaning than we ordinarily give them. On the other hand, I only mean such a Church as can claim to represent the traditional form of Christian belief and worship of the great mass of the people of a particular country.

If my outline of a Christian society has commanded the assent of the reader, he will agree that such a society can only be realised when the great majority of the sheep belong to one fold. To those who maintain that unity

is a matter of indifference, to those who maintain even that a diversity of theological views is a good thing to an indefinite degree, I can make no appeal. But if the desirability of unity be admitted, if the idea of a Christian society be grasped and accepted, then it can only be realised, in England, through the Church of England. This is not the place for discussing the theological position of that Church: if in any points it is wrong, inconsistent, or evasive, these are matters for reform within the Church. And I am not overlooking the possibility and hope of eventual reunion or reintegration, on one side and another; I am only affirming that it is this Church which, by reason of its tradition, its organisation, and its relation in the past to the religious-social life of the people, is the one for our purpose – and that no Christianisation of England can take place without it.

The Church of a Christian society, then, should have some relation to the three elements in a Christian society that I have named. It must have a hierarchical organisation in direct and official relation to the State: in which relation it is always in danger of sinking into a mere department of State. It must have an organisation, such as the parochial system, in direct contact with the smallest units of the community and their individual members. And finally, it must have, in the persons of its more intellectual, scholarly and devout officers, its masters of ascetic theology and its men of wider interests, a relation to the Community of Christians. In matters of dogma, matters of faith and morals, it will speak as the final authority within the nation; in more mixed questions it will speak through individuals. At times, it can and should be in conflict with the State, in rebuking derelictions in policy, or in defending itself against encroachments of the temporal power, or in shielding the community against tyranny and asserting its neglected rights, or in contesting heretical opinion or immoral legislation and administration. At times, the hierarchy of the Church may be under attack from the Community of Christians, or from groups within it: for any organisation is always in danger of corruption and in need of reform from within.

Although I am not here concerned with the means by which a Christian society could be brought about, it is necessary always to consider the idea in relation to particular existing societies; because one does not expect or desire that its constitution would be identical in all Christian countries. I do not assume that the relation of Church and State in England, either as it is or as it might be, is a model for all other communities. Whether an "Establishment" is the best relation in the abstract, is nowhere my

question. Were there no Establishment in England, we should have to examine its desirability. But as we have the Establishment, we must take the situation as we find it, and consider for a moment the merits of the problem of Disestablishment. The advocates of this course, within the Church, have many cogent reasons to expose:[45*] the abuses and scandals which such a change might remedy, the inconsistencies which might be removed, and the advantages which might accrue, are too patent to require mention. That abuses and defects of another kind might make their appearance in a disestablished Church, is a possibility which has not perhaps received enough attention. But what is much more to my point is the gravity of the abdication which the Church – whether voluntarily or under pressure – would be making. Setting aside the anomalies which might be corrected without going to that length, I will admit that an Established Church is exposed to peculiar temptations and compulsions: it has greater advantages and greater difficulties. But we must pause to reflect that a Church, once disestablished, cannot easily be re-established, and that the very act of disestablishment separates it more definitely and irrevocably from the life of the nation than if it had never been established. The effect on the mind of the people of the visible and dramatic withdrawal of the Church from the affairs of the nation, of the deliberate recognition of two standards and ways of life, of the Church's abandonment of all those who are not by their wholehearted profession within the fold – this is incalculable; the risks are so great that such an act can be nothing but a desperate measure. It appears to assume something which I am not yet ready to take for granted: that the division between Christians and non-Christians in this country is already, or is determined to become, so clear that it can be reduced to statistics. But if one believes, as I do, that the great majority of people are neither one thing nor the other, but are living in a no man's land, then the situation looks very different; and disestablishment instead of being the *recognition* of a condition at which we have arrived, would be the *creation* of a condition the results of which we cannot foresee.

With the reform of the Establishment I am not here concerned: the discussion of that requires a familiarity with constitutional, canon, and civil law. But I do not think that the argument from the prosperity of the disestablished Church of Wales, sometimes brought forward by advocates of disestablishment, is to the point.[46] Apart from the differences of racial temperament which must be taken into account, the full effect of disestablishment cannot be seen from the illustration of a small part of the

island; and, if disestablishment were made general, the full effect would not appear at once. And I think that the tendency of the time is opposed to the view that the religious and the secular life of the individual and the community can form two separate and autonomous domains. I know that a theology of the absolute separation of the life of the Spirit and the life of the World has spread from Germany.[47] Such a doctrine appears more plausible, when the Church's position is wholly defensive, when it is subject to daily persecution, when its spiritual claims are questioned and when its immediate necessity is to keep itself alive and to keep its doctrine pure. But this theology is incompatible with the assumptions underlying everything that I have been saying. The increasing complexity of modern life renders it unacceptable, for, as I have already said, we are faced with vital problems arising not merely out of the necessity of cooperating with non-Christians, but out of our unescapeable implication in non-Christian institutions and systems. And finally, the totalitarian tendency is against it, for the tendency of totalitarianism is to re-affirm, on a lower level, the religious-social nature of society. And I am convinced that you cannot have a national Christian society, a religious-social community, a society with a political philosophy founded upon the Christian faith, if it is constituted as a mere congeries of private and independent sects. The national faith must have an official recognition by the State, as well as an accepted status in the community and a basis of conviction in the heart of the individual.

Heresy is often defined as an insistence upon one half of the truth; it can also be an attempt to simplify the truth, by reducing it to the limits of our ordinary understanding, instead of enlarging our reason to the apprehension of truth. Monotheism or tritheism is easier to grasp than trinitarianism. We have observed the lamentable results of the attempt to isolate the Church from the World; there are also instances of the failure of the attempt to integrate the World in the Church; we must also be on guard against the attempt to integrate the Church in the World. A permanent danger of an established Church is Erastianism:[48] we do not need to refer to the eighteenth century, or to prewar Russia, to remind ourselves of that. Deplorable as such a situation is, it is not so much the immediate and manifest scandals but the ultimate consequences of Erastianism that are the most serious offences. By alienating the mass of the people from orthodox Christianity, by leading them to identify the Church with the actual hierarchy and to suspect it of being an instrument of oligarchy or class, it leaves

men's minds exposed to varieties of irresponsible and irreflective enthusiasm followed by a second crop of paganism.

The danger of a National Church becoming a class Church, is not one that concerns us immediately to-day; for now that it is possible to be respectable without being a member of the Church of England, or a Christian of any kind, it is also possible to be a member of the Church of England without being – in that sense – respectable. The danger that a National Church might become also a nationalistic Church is one to which our predecessors theorising about Church and State could hardly have been expected to devote attention, since the danger of nationalism itself, and the danger of the supersession of every form of Christianity, could not have been very present to their minds.[49*] Yet the danger was always there: and, for some persons still, Rome is associated with the Armada and Kingsley's *Westward Ho!*[50] For a National Church tends to reflect only the religious-social habits of the nation; and its members, in so far as they are isolated from the Christian communities of other nations, may tend to lose all criteria by which to distinguish, in their own religious-social complex, between what is universal and what is local, accidental, and erratic. Within limits, the cultus of the universal Church may quite properly vary according to the racial temperaments and cultural traditions of each nation. Roman Catholicism is not quite the same thing (to the eye of the sociologist, if not to that of the theologian) in Spain, France, Ireland and the United States of America, and but for central authority it would differ much more widely. The tendency to differ may be as strong among bodies of the same communion in different countries, as among various sects within the same country; and, indeed, the sects within one country may be expected to show traits in common, which none of them will share with the same communion abroad.

The evils of nationalistic Christianity have, in the past, been mitigated by the relative weakness of national consciousness and the strength of Christian tradition. They have not been wholly absent: missionaries have sometimes been accused of propagating (through ignorance, not through cunning) the customs and attitudes of the social groups to which they have belonged, rather than giving the natives the essentials of the Christian faith in such a way that they might harmonise their own culture with it. On the other hand, I think that some events during the last twenty-five years have led to an increasing recognition of the supranational Christian society: for if that is not marked by such conferences as those of Lausanne,

Stockholm, Oxford, Edinburgh – and also Malines – then I do not know of what use these conferences have been.[51] The purpose of the labours involved in arranging intercommunion between the official Churches of certain countries is not merely to provide reciprocal sacramental advantages for travellers, but to affirm the Universal Church on earth. Certainly, no one to-day can defend the idea of a National Church, without balancing it with the idea of the Universal Church, and without keeping in mind that truth is one and that theology has no frontiers.

I think that the dangers to which a National Church is exposed, when the Universal Church is no more than a pious ideal, are so obvious that only to mention them is to command assent. Completely identified with a particular people, the National Church may at all times, but especially at moments of excitement, become no more than the voice of that people's prejudice, passion or interest. But there is another danger, not quite so easily identified. I have maintained that the idea of a Christian society implies, for me, the existence of one Church which shall *aim at* comprehending the whole nation. Unless it has this aim, we relapse into that conflict between citizenship and church-membership, between public and private morality, which to-day makes moral life so difficult for everyone, and which in turn provokes that craving for a simplified, monistic solution of statism or racism which the National Church can only combat if it recognises its position as a part of the Universal Church. But if we allowed ourselves to entertain for Europe (to confine our attention to that continent) the ideal merely of a kind of society of Christian societies, we might tend unconsciously to treat the idea of the Universal Church as only the idea of a supernatural League of Nations. The direct allegiance of the individual would be to his National Church alone, and the Universal Church would remain an abstraction or become a cockpit for conflicting national interests. But the difference between the Universal Church and a perfected League of Nations is this, that the allegiance of the individual to his own Church is secondary to his allegiance to the Universal Church. Unless the National Church is a part of the whole, it has no claim upon me: but a League of Nations which could have a claim upon the devotion of the individual, prior to the claim of his country, is a chimaera which very few persons can even have endeavoured to picture to themselves. I have spoken more than once of the intolerable position of those who try to lead a Christian life in a non-Christian world. But it must be kept in mind that even in a Christian society as well organised as we can conceive possible in

this world, the limit would be that our temporal and spiritual life should be harmonised: the temporal and spiritual would never be identified. There would always remain a dual allegiance, to the State and to the Church, to one's countrymen and to one's fellow-Christians everywhere, and the latter would always have the primacy. There would always be a tension; and this tension is essential to the idea of a Christian society, and is a distinguishing mark between a Christian and a pagan society.

IV

It should be obvious that the form of political organisation of a Christian State does not come within the scope of this discussion. To identify any particular form of government with Christianity is a dangerous error: for it confounds the permanent with the transitory, the absolute with the contingent. Forms of government, and of social organisation, are in constant process of change, and their operation may be very different from the theory which they are supposed to exemplify. A theory of the State may be, explicitly or implicitly, anti-Christian: it may arrogate rights which only the Church is entitled to claim, or pretend to decide moral questions on which only the Church is qualified to pronounce. On the other hand, a régime may in practice claim either more or less than it professes, and we have to examine its working as well as its constitution. We have no assurance that a democratic régime might not be as inimical to Christianity in practice, as another might be in theory: and the best government must be relative to the character and the stage of intelligence and education of a particular people in a particular place at a particular time. Those who consider that a discussion of the nature of a Christian society should conclude by supporting a particular form of political organisation, should ask themselves whether they really believe our form of government to be more important than our Christianity; and those who are convinced that the present form of government of Britain is the one most suitable for any Christian people, should ask themselves whether they are confusing a Christian society with a society in which individual Christianity is tolerated.

This essay is not intended to be either an anti-communist or an anti-fascist manifesto; the reader may by this time have forgotten what I said at the beginning, to the effect that I was less concerned with the more superficial, though important differences between the regiment of different nations, than with the more profound differences between pagan and Christian society. Our preoccupation with foreign politics during the last

few years has induced a surface complacency rather than a consistent attempt at self-examination of conscience. Sometimes we are almost persuaded that we are getting on very nicely, with a reform here and a reform there, and would have been getting on still better, if only foreign governments did not insist upon breaking all the rules and playing what is really a different game. What is more depressing still is the thought that only fear or jealousy of foreign success can alarm us about the health of our own nation; that only through this anxiety can we see such things as depopulation, malnutrition, moral deterioration, the decay of agriculture, as evils at all. And what is worst of all is to advocate Christianity, not because it is true, but because it might be beneficial. Towards the end of 1938 we experienced a wave of revivalism which should teach us that folly is not the prerogative of any one political party or any one religious communion, and that hysteria is not the privilege of the uneducated.[52*] The Christianity expressed has been vague, the religious fervour has been a fervour for democracy. It may engender nothing better than a disguised and peculiarly sanctimonious nationalism, accelerating our progress towards the paganism which we say we abhor. To justify Christianity because it provides a foundation of morality, instead of showing the necessity of Christian morality from the truth of Christianity, is a very dangerous inversion; and we may reflect, that a good deal of the attention of totalitarian states has been devoted, with a steadiness of purpose not always found in democracies, to providing their national life with a foundation of morality – the wrong kind perhaps, but a good deal more of it. It is not enthusiasm, but dogma, that differentiates a Christian from a pagan society.

I have tried to restrict my ambition of a Christian society to a social minimum: to picture, not a society of saints, but of ordinary men, of men whose Christianity is communal before being individual. It is very easy for speculation on a possible Christian order in the future to tend to come to rest in a kind of apocalyptic vision of a golden age of virtue. But we have to remember that the Kingdom of Christ on earth will never be realised, and also that it is always being realised; we must remember that whatever reform or revolution we carry out, the result will always be a sordid travesty of what human society should be – though the world is never left wholly without glory. In such a society as I imagine, as in any that is not petrified, there will be innumerable seeds of decay. Any human scheme for society is realised only when the great mass of humanity has become adapted to it; but this adaptation becomes also, insensibly, an adaptation of the scheme

itself to the mass on which it operates: the overwhelming pressure of mediocrity, sluggish and indomitable as a glacier, will mitigate the most violent, and depress the most exalted revolution, and what is realised is so unlike the end that enthusiasm conceived, that foresight would weaken the effort. A wholly Christian society might be a society for the most part on a low level; it would engage the cooperation of many whose Christianity was spectral or superstitious or feigned, and of many whose motives were primarily worldly and selfish. It would require constant reform.

I should not like it to be thought, however, that I considered the presence of the higher forms of devotional life to be a matter of minor importance for such a society. I have, it is true, insisted upon the communal, rather than the individual aspect: a community of men and women, not individually better than they are now, except for the capital difference of holding the Christian faith. But their holding the Christian faith would give them something else which they lack: a *respect* for the religious life, for the life of prayer and contemplation, and for those who attempt to practise it. In this I am asking no more of the British Christian, than is characteristic of the ordinary Moslem or Hindu. But the ordinary man would need the opportunity to know that the religious life existed, that it was given its due place, would need to recognise the profession of those who have abandoned the world, as he recognises the professions practised in it. I cannot conceive a Christian society without religious orders, even purely contemplative orders, even enclosed orders. And, incidentally, I should not like the "Community of Christians" of which I have spoken, to be thought of as merely the nicest, most intelligent and public-spirited of the upper middle class – it is not to be conceived on that analogy.

We may say that religion, as distinguished from modern paganism, implies a life in conformity with nature. It may be observed that the natural life and the supernatural life have a conformity to each other which neither has with the mechanistic life: but so far has our notion of what is natural become distorted, that people who consider it "unnatural" and therefore repugnant, that a person of either sex should elect a life of celibacy, consider it perfectly "natural" that families should be limited to one or two children. It would perhaps be more natural, as well as in better conformity with the Will of God, if there were more celibates and if those who were married had larger families. But I am thinking of "conformity to nature" in a wider sense than this. We are being made aware that the organisation of society on the principle of private profit, as well as public destruction, is

leading both to the deformation of humanity by unregulated industrialism, and to the exhaustion of natural resources, and that a good deal of our material progress is a progress for which succeeding generations may have to pay dearly. I need only mention, as an instance now very much before the public eye, the results of "soil-erosion" – the exploitation of the earth, on a vast scale for two generations, for commercial profit: immediate benefits leading to dearth and desert.[53] I would not have it thought that I condemn a society because of its material ruin, for that would be to make its material success a sufficient test of its excellence; I mean only that a wrong attitude towards nature implies, somewhere, a wrong attitude towards God, and that the consequence is an inevitable doom. For a long enough time we have believed in nothing but the values arising in a mechanised, commercialised, urbanised way of life: it would be as well for us to face the permanent conditions upon which God allows us to live upon this planet. And without sentimentalising the life of the savage, we might practise the humility to observe, in some of the societies upon which we look down as primitive or backward, the operation of a social-religious-artistic complex which we should emulate upon a higher plane. We have been accustomed to regard "progress" as always integral; and have yet to learn that it is only by an effort and a discipline, greater than society has yet seen the need of imposing upon itself, that material knowledge and power is gained without loss of spiritual knowledge and power. The struggle to recover the sense of relation to nature and to God, the recognition that even the most primitive feelings should be part of our heritage, seems to me to be the explanation and justification of the life of D. H. Lawrence, and the excuse for his aberrations. But we need not only to learn how to look at the world with the eyes of a Mexican Indian – and I hardly think that Lawrence succeeded – and we certainly cannot afford to stop there.[54] We need to know how to see the world as the Christian Fathers saw it; and the purpose of reascending to origins is that we should be able to return, with greater spiritual knowledge, to our own situation. We need to recover the sense of religious fear, so that it may be overcome by religious hope.

I should not like to leave the reader supposing that I have attempted to contribute one more amateur sketch of an abstract and impracticable future: the blue-print from which the doctrinaire criticises the piecemeal day-to-day efforts of political men. These latter efforts have to go on; but unless we can find a pattern in which all problems of life can have their place, we are only likely to go on complicating chaos. So long, for instance,

as we consider finance, industry, trade, agriculture merely as competing interests to be reconciled from time to time as best they may, so long as we consider "education" as a good in itself of which everyone has a right to the utmost, without any ideal of the good life for society or for the individual, we shall move from one uneasy compromise to another. To the quick and simple organisation of society for ends which, being only material and worldly, must be as ephemeral as worldly success, there is only one alternative. As political philosophy derives its sanction from ethics, and ethics from the truth of religion, it is only by returning to the eternal source of truth that we can hope for any social organisation which will not, to its ultimate destruction, ignore some essential aspect of reality. The term "democracy," as I have said again and again, does not contain enough positive content to stand alone against the forces that you dislike – it can easily be transformed by them.[55] If you will not have God (and He is a jealous God) you should pay your respects to Hitler or Stalin.

I believe that there must be many persons who, like myself, were deeply shaken by the events of September 1938, in a way from which one does not recover; persons to whom that month brought a profounder realisation of a general plight. It was not a disturbance of the understanding: the events themselves were not surprising. Nor, as became increasingly evident, was our distress due merely to disagreement with the policy and behaviour of the moment. The feeling which was new and unexpected was a feeling of humiliation, which seemed to demand an act of personal contrition, of humility, repentance and amendment; what had happened was something in which one was deeply implicated and responsible. It was not, I repeat, a criticism of the government, but a doubt of the validity of a civilisation. We could not match conviction with conviction, we had no ideas with which we could either meet or oppose the ideas opposed to us. Was our society, which had always been so assured of its superiority and rectitude, so confident of its unexamined premisses, assembled round anything more permanent than a congeries of banks, insurance companies and industries, and had it any beliefs more essential than a belief in compound interest and the maintenance of dividends? Such thoughts as these formed the starting point, and must remain the excuse, for saying what I have had to say.[56*]

September 6th, 1939. The whole of this book, with Preface and Notes, was completed before it was known that we should be at war.[57] But the possibility of war, which has now been realised, was always present to my

mind, and the only additional observations which I feel called upon to make are these: first, that the alignment of forces which has now revealed itself should bring more clearly to our consciousness the alternative of Christianity or paganism;[58] and, second, that we cannot afford to defer our constructive thinking to the conclusion of hostilities – a moment when, as we should know from experience, good counsel is liable to be obscured.[59]

NOTES

Page 8. [5.685][60] In using the term "Idea" I have of course had in mind the definition given by Coleridge, when he lays down at the beginning of his *Church and State* that: "By an idea I mean (in this instance) that conception of a thing, which is not abstracted from any particular state, form, or mode, in which the thing may happen to exist at this or at that time; nor yet generalized from any number or succession of such forms or modes; but which is given by the knowledge of its ultimate aim" [11].

P. 10. [5.686] Christian sociologists. I am deeply indebted to several Christian economists and sociologists, both in England and elsewhere, and notably to R. H. Tawney.[61] My difference of approach in these pages need not be further elaborated, but it is interesting to compare the treatment of the problem of Church and State by V. A. Demant in his very valuable *Christian Polity*, p. 120 ff. and p. 135 ff.[62] Fr. Demant observes that the authority of the Church "cannot now be claimed on the ground that it represents all citizens" [122].[63] But while the Church does not represent all citizens in the sense in which a Member of Parliament may be said to "represent" his constituents, even those who vote consistently against him, yet its function seems to me wider than only to "safeguard the individual in his right to pursue certain purposes which are not political purposes" [122]; what I am primarily concerned with throughout is not the responsibility of the Church towards the individual but towards the community. The relation of the Church with the State may be one of checks and balances, but the background and justification of this relation is the Church's relation to *Society*. Fr. Demant gives a very good account of the forces tending towards acceptance of the absolutist State, and remarks truly that: "This fact of the secularization of human life does not arise mainly from the extension of the State's powers. This is rather the effort of the State to recover significance in the life of a people which has become disintegrated through the confusion of social means and ends which is its secularization" [131].

One of the causes of the totalitarian State is an effort of the State to supply a function which the Church has ceased to serve; to enter into a relation to the community which the Church has failed to maintain; which leads to the recognition as full citizens only of those who are prepared to accept it in this relation.

I agree cordially with Fr. Demant's observation that: "The fact which renders most of our theories of Church and State irrelevant is the domination of politics by economics and finance; and this is most true in democratic states. The subservience of politics to plutocracy is the main fact about the State confronting the Church to-day" [132].

Fr. Demant is concerned with the reform of this situation, in a secular society; and with the right position of the Church in a secular society. But unless I have misunderstood him, he appears to me to take this secularisation for granted. Assuming that our present society is neutral rather than non-Christian, I am concerned with enquiring what it might be like if it took the Christian direction.

P. 19. [5.692] "Totalitarianism can retain the terms 'freedom' and 'democracy' and give them its own meaning." A letter appeared in *The Times* (April 24, 1939) from General J. F. C. Fuller, who, as *The Times* had previously stated, was one of the two British visitors invited to Herr Hitler's birthday celebrations.[64] General Fuller states that he is "a firm believer in the democracy of Mazzini, because he places duty to the nation before individual rights" [12]. General Fuller calls himself a "British Fascist,"[65] and believes that Britain "must swim with the out-flowing tide of this great political change" [12] (i.e. to a fascist system of government).

From my point of view, General Fuller has as good a title to call himself a "believer in democracy" as anyone else.

P. 19. [5.692] Imitation *à rebours*. A column in the *Evening Standard* of May 10, 1939, headed "'Back to the Kitchen' Creed Denounced," reported the annual conference of the Civil Service Clerical Association.

> Miss Bower, of the Ministry of Transport, who moved that the association should take steps to obtain the removal of the ban (i.e. against married women Civil Servants), said it was wise to abolish an institution which embodied one of the main tenets of the Nazi creed – the relegation of women to the sphere of the kitchen, the children and the church.[66]

The report, by its abbreviation, may do less than justice to Miss Bower, but I do not think that I am unfair to the report, in finding the implication that what is Nazi is wrong, and need not be discussed on its own merits. Incidentally, the term "relegation of women" prejudices the issue. Might one suggest that the kitchen, the children and the church could be considered to have a claim upon the attention of married women? or that no normal married woman would prefer to be a wage-earner if she could help it? What is miserable is a system that makes the dual wage necessary.

P. 20. [5.692] Fascist doctrine. I mean only such doctrine as asserts the absolute authority of the state, or the infallibility of a ruler. "The corporative state," recommended by *Quadragesimo Anno*, is not in question.[67] The economic organisation of totalitarian states is not in question. The ordinary person does not object to fascism because it is pagan, but because he is fearful of authority, even when it is pagan.

P. 20. [5.692] The red herring of the German national religion. I cannot hold such a low opinion of German intelligence as to accept any stories of the revival of pre-Christian cults. I can, however, believe that the kind of religion expounded by Professor Wilhelm Hauer is really in existence – and I am very sorry to believe it. I rely upon the essay contributed by Dr. Hauer to a very interesting volume, *Germany's New Religion* (Allen and Unwin, 1937), in which orthodox Lutheranism is defended by Karl Heim, and Catholicism by Karl Adam.[68]

The religion of Hauer is deistic, claiming to "worship a more than human God."[69] He believes it to be "an eruption from the biological and spiritual depths of the German nation" [29-30], and unless one is prepared to deny that the German nation has such depths, I do not see that the statement can be ridiculed. He believes that "each new age must mold its own religious forms" [34] – alas, many persons in Anglo-Saxon countries hold the same belief. He professes himself to be particularly a disciple of Eckhart; and whether or not one believes that the doctrines condemned by the Church were what Eckhart strove to propagate, it is certainly the condemned doctrine that Hauer holds.[70] He considers that the "revolt of the German from Christianity reached its culmination in Nietzsche" [38]: many people would not limit that revolt to the German. He advocates tolerance.[71] He objects to Christianity because "It claims to possess the absolute truth, and with this claim is bound up the idea that men can only achieve

salvation in one way, through Christ, and that it must send to the stake those whose faith and life do not conform, or pray for them till they quit the error of their ways for the kingdom of God" [45]. Thousands of people in Western countries would agree with this attitude. He objects to sacramental religion, because "everyone has an immediate relation to God, is, in fact, in the depths of his heart one with the eternal Ground of the world" [47-48]. Faith comes not from revelation but from "personal experience" [50]. He is not interested in "the mass of intellectuals," but in the "multitudes of ordinary people" who are looking for "Life."[72] "We believe," he says, "that God has laid a great task on our nation, and that he has therefore revealed himself specially in its history and will continue to do so" [53]. To my ear, such phrases have a not altogether unfamiliar ring. Hauer believes also in something very popular in this country, the religion of the blue sky, the grass and flowers. He believes that Jesus (even if he was wholly Semitic on both sides) is one of the "great figures who soar above the centuries."[73]

I have quoted so much, in order to let Professor Hauer declare himself for what he is: the end product of German Liberal Protestantism, a nationalistic Unitarian. Translated into English terms, he might be made to appear as simply a patriotic Modernist. The German National Religion, as Hauer expounds it, turns out to be something with which we are already familiar. So, if the German Religion is also your religion, the sooner you realise the fact the better.

P. 23. [5.694] "Hygienic morality." M. Denis de Rougemont, in his remarkable book *L'Amour et l'occident*, has this sentence (p. 269) which is to the point: "L'anarchie des mœurs et l'hygiène autoritaire agissent à peu près dans le même sens: elles déçoivent le besoin de passion, héréditaire ou acquis par la culture; elles détendent ses ressorts intimes et personnels."[74]

P. 24. [5.695] It may be opportune at this point to say a word about the attitude of a Christian Society towards Pacifism. I am not concerned with rationalistic pacifism, or with humanitarian pacifism, but with Christian pacifism – that which asserts that all warfare is categorically forbidden to followers of Our Lord. This absolute Christian pacifism should be distinguished again from another: that which would assert that only a *Christian* society is worth fighting for, and that a particular society may fall so far short, or may be so positively anti-Christian, that no Christian will be

justified or excused for fighting for it. With this relative Christian pacifism I cannot be concerned, because my hypothesis is that of a Christian society. In such a society, what will be the place of the Christian pacifist?[75]

Such a person would continue to exist, as sects and individual vagaries would probably continue to exist; and it would be the duty of the Christian who was not a pacifist to treat the pacifist with consideration and respect. It would also be the duty of the State to treat him with consideration and respect, having assured itself of his sincerity. The man who believes that a particular war in which his country proposes to engage is an aggressive war, who believes that his country could refuse to take part in it without its legitimate interests being imperilled, and without failing in its duty to God and its neighbours, would be wrong to remain silent (the attitude of the late Charles Eliot Norton in regard to the Spanish-American War of 1898 is to the point).[76] But I cannot but believe that the man who maintains that war is in all circumstances wrong, is in some way repudiating an obligation towards society; and in so far as the society is a Christian society the obligation is so much the more serious. Even if each particular war proves in turn to have been unjustified, yet the idea of a Christian society seems incompatible with the idea of absolute pacifism; for pacifism can only continue to flourish so long as the majority of persons forming a society are not pacifists; just as sectarianism can only flourish against the background of orthodoxy. The notion of communal responsibility, of the responsibility of every individual for the sins of the society to which he belongs, is one that needs to be more firmly apprehended; and if I share the guilt of my society in time of "peace," I do not see how I can absolve myself from it in time of war, by abstaining from the common action.

P. 26. [5.695] The Community of Christians. This term is perhaps open to objection. I did not wish to employ Coleridge's term "clerisy" while altering its meaning, but I assume that the reader is familiar with "clerisy" in his *Church and State*, and with Mr. Middleton Murry's use of the same word. Perhaps the term "Community of Christians" may connote to some a kind of esoteric *chapelle* or fraternity of the self-appointed, but I hope that what is said later in this chapter may prevent that inference. I wished to avoid excessive emphasis on nominal function, as it seemed to me that Coleridge's "clerisy" might tend to become merely a brahminical *caste*.

I should add, as a note on the use of the phrase "superior intellectual and/or spiritual gifts" (20) [5.703],[77] that the possession of intellectual or

spiritual gifts does not necessarily confer that intellectual understanding of spiritual issues which is the qualification for exerting the kind of influence here required. Nor is the person who possesses this qualification necessarily a "better Christian" in his private life than the man whose insight is less profound; nor is he necessarily exempt from doctrinal error. I prefer that the definition should be, provisionally, too comprehensive rather than too narrow.

P. 36. [5.702] Christian Education. This note, as well as that on "The Community of Christians," is elicited by a searching comment by Bro. George Every, S.S.M., who has been so kind as to read this book in proof. Those who have read a paper called "Modern Education and the Classics," written in a different context, and published in a volume entitled *Essays Ancient and Modern*, may assume that what I have in mind is simply the "classical education" of earlier times.[78] The problem of Education is too large to be considered in a brief book like this, and the question of the best curriculum is not here raised. I limit myself to the assertion that the miscellaneous curriculum will not do, and that education must be something more than the acquisition of information, technical competence, or superficial culture. Furthermore, I am not here concerned with what must occupy the mind of anyone approaching the subject of Education directly, that is the question of what should be done *now*. The point upon which all who are dissatisfied with contemporary Education can agree, is the necessity for criteria and values. But one must start by expelling from one's mind any mere prejudice or sentiment in favour of any previous system of education, and recognising the differences between the society for which we have to legislate, and any form of society which we have known in the past.

P. 40. [5.704] Uniformity of culture. In an important passage in *Beyond Politics* (23-31) Mr. Christopher Dawson discusses the possibility of an "organisation of culture." He recognises that it is impossible to do this "by any kind of philosophic or scientific dictatorship," or by a return "to the old humanist discipline of letters, for that is inseparable from the aristocratic ideal of a privileged caste of scholars." He asserts that "A democratic society must find a correspondingly democratic organization of culture"; and finds that "the form of organization appropriate to our society in the field of culture as well as in that of politics is the party – that is to say a voluntary organization for common ends based on a common 'ideology'" [23-24].

I think that I am in close sympathy with Mr. Dawson's aims, and yet I find it difficult to apprehend the meaning of this "culture" which will have no philosophy (for philosophy, he reminds us, has lost its ancient prestige)[79] and which will not be specifically religious. What, in the kind of society to which we are approximating, will be a "democratic organization of culture"? To substitute for "democratic" a term which for me has greater concreteness, I should say that the society which is coming into existence, and which is advancing in every country whether "democratic" or "totalitarian," is a lower middle class society: I should expect the culture of the twentieth century to belong to the lower middle class as that of the Victorian age belonged to the upper middle class or commercial aristocracy. If then for Mr. Dawson's phrase we substitute the words "a lower middle class society must find a correspondingly lower middle class organisation of culture" we have something which seems to me to possess more meaning, though it leaves us in greater perplexity. And if Mr. Dawson's Culture Party – about which, however, our information is still meagre – is to be representative of this future society, is it likely to provide anything more important than, for example, a lower middle class Royal Academy instead of one supplying portrait painters for aldermen?

It may be that I have wholly failed to understand what Mr. Dawson is after: if so, I can only hope that he will let us have a fuller exposition of his ideas. Unless some useful analogy can be given from the past, I cannot understand the "organization of culture," which appears to be without precedent; and in isolating culture from religion, politics and philosophy we seem to be left with something no more apprehensible than the scent of last year's roses. When we speak of culture, I suppose that we have in mind the existence of two classes of people: the producers and the consumers of culture – the existence of men who can create new thought and new art (with middlemen who can teach the consumers to like it) and the existence of a cultivated society to enjoy and patronise it. The former you can only encourage, the latter you can only educate.

I would not belittle the importance, in a period of transition, of the rearguard action; of such institutions, in their various special ways, as the National Trust, the Society for the Preservation of Ancient Buildings, even the National Society.[80] We ought not to cut down old trees until we have learned to plant new ones. But Mr. Dawson is concerned with something more important than the preservation of relics of former culture. My

provisional view can only be that "culture" is a by-product, and that those who sympathise with Mr. Dawson in resenting the tyranny of politics, must direct their attention to the problem of Education, and of how, in the lower middle class society of the future, to provide for the training of an élite of thought, conduct and taste.

When I speak of a probable "lower middle class society" I do not anticipate – short of some at present unpredictable revolution – the rise in Britain of a lower middle class political hierarchy, though our ruling class will have to cultivate, in its dealings with foreign countries, an understanding of that mentality. Britain will presumably continue to be governed by the same mercantile and financial class which, with a continual change of personnel, has been increasingly important since the fifteenth century. I mean by a "lower middle class society" one in which the standard man legislated for and catered for, the man whose passions must be manipulated, whose prejudices must be humoured, whose tastes must be gratified, will be the lower middle class man. He is the most numerous, the one most necessary to flatter. I am not necessarily implying that this is either a good or a bad thing: that depends upon what lower middle class Man does to himself, and what is done to him.

P. 48. [5.709] Advocates of Disestablishment. It is interesting to compare Bishop Hensley Henson's vigorous defence of the Establishment, *Cui Bono?*, published more than forty years ago, with his more recent *Disestablishment*, in which he took a contrary view, but too great importance could be attached, by one side or the other, to this recantation.[81] The argument for Establishment in the early essay, and the argument against it in the later, are both well presented, and both deserve study. What has happened seems to me to be simply that Bishop Hensley Henson has come to take a different view of the tendencies of modern society; and the changes since the end of the last century are great enough to excuse such a change of opinion. His early argument is not invalidated; he might say that the situation is now such that it cannot be applied.

I must take this occasion for calling attention to the great excellence of Bishop Hensley Henson's prose, whether it is employed in a volume prepared at leisure, or in an occasional letter to *The Times*.[82] For vigour and purity of controversial English, he has no superior to-day, and his writings should long continue to be studied by those who aspire to write well.

P. 51. [5.711] The dangers of a nationalistic Church. Doubts about the doctrinal security of a national Church must come to the mind of any reader of Mr. Middleton Murry's *The Price of Leadership*. The first part of this book I read with the warmest admiration, and I can support all that Mr. Murry says in favour of a National Church against sectarianism and private Christianity. But at the point at which Mr. Murry allies himself with Dr. Thomas Arnold I begin to hesitate. I have no first hand acquaintance with the doctrines of Dr. Arnold, and must rely upon Mr. Murry's exposition of them. But Mr. Murry does not engage my complete confidence in Arnold; nor do the citations of Arnold reassure me about the orthodoxy of Mr. Murry. Mr. Murry holds that "The real conflict that is preparing is the conflict between Christianity and anti-Christian nationalism" [79]: but surely a nationalism which is overtly antagonistic to Christianity is a less dangerous menace for us than a nationalism which professes a Christianity from which all Christian content has been evacuated. That the Church in England should be identical with the nation – a view which Mr. Murry believes he has found in Arnold and before him in Coleridge, and which Mr. Murry himself accepts[83] – is a laudable aim so long as we keep in mind that we are speaking of one aspect of the Church; but unless this is balanced by the idea of the relation of the Church in England to the Universal Church, I see no safeguard for the purity or the catholicity of its doctrine. I am not even sure that Mr. Murry desires such a safeguard. He quotes, with apparent approval, this sentence by Matthew Arnold: "Will there never arise among Catholics some great soul, to perceive that the eternity and universality, which is vainly claimed for Catholic dogma and the ultramontane system, might really be possible for Catholic worship?"[84]

Well! if eternity and universality is to be found, not in dogma, but in worship – that means, in a common form of worship which will mean to the worshippers anything that they like to fancy, then the result seems to me to be likely to be the most corrupt form of ritualism. What does Mr. Murry mean by Christianity in his National Church, except whatever the nation as such may decide to call Christianity, and what is to prevent the Christianity from being degraded to the nationalism, rather than the nationalism being raised to Christianity?

Mr. Murry holds that Dr. Arnold introduced a new Christian spirit into the public schools. I would not deny to Dr. Arnold the honour of having reformed and improved the moral standards inculcated by public schools,

or dispute the assertion that to him and to his son "we owe the tradition of disinterested public service."[85] But at what price? Mr. Murry believes that the ideals of Dr. Arnold have been degraded and adulterated by a subsequent generation:[86] I would like to be sure that the results were not implicit in the principles. To me there appear to be further possible results. Mr. Murry says "the main organ of this new national and Christian society is the state; the state is, indeed, the organ indispensable to its manifestation. For this reason it is inevitable that in the new national society, if it is to be in some real sense a Christian society, the Church and the state should draw together. On the nature of this drawing together of Church and state, everything depends" [165].

This paragraph, especially in conjunction with Mr. Murry's suggestion that the public schools should be taken over by the state,[87] makes me suspect that Mr. Murry is ready to go a long way towards totalitarianism; and without any explicit statement on his part about the Christian beliefs which are necessary for salvation, or about the supernatural reality of the Church, we might even conclude that he would go some way in the direction of an English National Religion, the formulation of which would be taken in hand by the moral re-armament manufacturers.

Mr. Murry appears (111) to follow Dr. Arnold in attaching little importance to the apostolical succession.[88] With regard to the position of Matthew Arnold, he says (125) "In this situation no mere revival of Christian piety could possibly avail: not even a rebirth of Christian saintliness (such as he admired in Newman) could be efficacious against it." It is only a short step from employing the adjective *mere* to ignoring Christian piety. He continues "What was required was a renovation of Christian understanding, an enlarged conception of the spiritual life itself" [125].

How such an enlargement of the conception of the spiritual life is to take place without spiritual masters, without the rebirth of saintliness, I cannot conceive.

P. 58. [5.714] Wave of revivalism. "Moral re-armament" has been competently and authoritatively analysed from the theological point of view by Fr. Hilary Carpenter, O.P., in the April 1939 issue of *Blackfriars*, and by Professor H. A. Hodges in the May issue of *Theology*.[89] But I feel that everything that remains of clear thinking in this country should be summoned to protest against this abuse of Christianity and of English. A reading of Mr. H. W. Austin's compilation *Moral Re-Armament* suggests several

lines of thought.[90] Our immediate reflection is upon the extraordinary facility with which men of the greatest eminence will lend their names to any public appeal, however obscure or ambiguous.[91] Another thought is that the kind of mental activity exposed by these letters must have a very demoralising effect upon the language. Coleridge remarked that "In a language like ours, where so many words are derived from other languages, there are few modes of instruction more useful or more amusing than that of accustoming young people to seek for the etymology, or primary meaning, of the words they use. There are cases, in which more knowledge of more value may be conveyed by the history of a *word*, than by the history of a campaign."[92] For instance, in a letter to *The Times* reprinted in Mr. Austin's pamphlet, it is said that "national security at home and abroad can only be gained through moral regeneration."[93] Even allowing that "*moral* regeneration" is intended to represent some milder form of parturition than *regeneration*, it is a very striking adaptation of the words of the Gospel to declare that unless a nation be born again it cannot achieve national security.[94] The word *regeneration* appears to have degenerated. In the next paragraph "regeneration" has been replaced by "re-armament."[95] I do not doubt that the term "moral and spiritual re-armament" was originally coined merely as a striking reminder that we need something more than material equipment, but it has quickly shrunk to imply another kind of equipment *on the same plane*: that is, for ends which need be no better than worldly.

In spite of the fervour which tinges the whole correspondence, I cannot find anything to suggest that *Christianity* is needed. Some of the signers, at least, I know to be Christians, but the movement in itself, to judge by this pamphlet, is no more essentially Christian than the German National Religion of Professor Hauer. I have no first-hand experience of the Buchmanite Movement, by which this pamphlet appears to be inspired, but I have never seen any evidence that to be a Buchmanite it was necessary to hold the Christian Faith according to the Creeds, and until I have seen a statement to that effect, I shall continue to doubt whether there is any reason to call Buchmanism a Christian movement.[96]

I am alarmed, by what are not necessary implications, but are certainly possibilities, and to my mind probabilities, of further development of this kind. It is the possibility of gradually adapting our religion to fit our secular aims – *some* of which may be worthy aims, but none of which will be criticised by a supernatural measure. Moral re-armament in my opinion may

easily lead to a progressive Germanisation of our society. We observe the efficiency of the German machine, and we perceive that we cannot emulate it without a kind of religious enthusiasm. Moral re-armament will provide the enthusiasm, and be the most useful kind of political drug – that is to say, having the potency at once of a stimulant and a narcotic: but it will supply this function to the detriment of our religion.

> There is a tendency, especially among the English-speaking Protestant peoples, to treat religion as a kind of social tonic that can be used in times of national emergency in order to extract a further degree of moral effort from the people. But apart from the Pelagian conception of religion that this view implies, it is not wholly sound from the psychological point of view, since it merely heightens the amount of moral tension without increasing the sources of spiritual vitality or resolving the psychological conflicts from which the society suffers.
>
> Christopher Dawson: *Beyond Politics*, p. 21[-22][97]

> [W]hile the humanistic religious sentiment which expresses itself by the catch in the throat at the last Evensong in the old School Chapel, the community singing of *Abide with me* at a torchlight tattoo, and the standing to attention during the Two Minutes' Silence, can be utilised by totalitarianism, a religion which speaks of redemption by the incarnate Son of God, which offers mankind the sacramental means of union with the eternal life of the God-Man Jesus Christ, and which makes the perpetual re-presentation of His atoning Sacrifice its essential act of worship must be the declared enemy of all who see in the state the be-all and end-all of man's life.
>
> Humphry Beevor: *Peace and Pacifism*, p. 207[-08][98]

P. 64. [5.717] I have permission to reprint, from *The Times* of October 5, 1938, the following letter, which might serve either as prologue or epilogue to all that I have said, and which provided the immediate stimulus for the lectures which form this book.[99]

3rd October, 1938.

Sir,

The lessons which are being drawn from the unforgettable experiences through which we have lived during the past few days do not for the most part seem to me to go deep enough. The period of grace that has been given

us may be no more than a postponement of the day of reckoning unless we make up our minds to seek a radical cure. Our civilisation can recover only if we are determined to root out the cancerous growths which have brought it to the verge of complete collapse. Whether truth and justice or caprice and violence are to prevail in human affairs is a question on which the fate of mankind depends. But to equate the conflict between these opposing forces with the contrast between democracies and dictatorships, real and profound as is this difference, is a dangerous simplification of the problem. To focus our attention on evil in others is a way of escape from the painful struggle of eradicating it from our own hearts and lives and an evasion of our real responsibilities.

The basal truth is that the spiritual foundations of western civilisation have been undermined. The systems which are in the ascendant on the continent may be regarded from one point of view as convulsive attempts to arrest the process of disintegration. What clear alternative have we in this country? The mind of England is confused and uncertain. Is it possible that a simple question, an affirmative answer to which is for many a matter of course and for many others an idle dream or sheer lunacy, might in these circumstances become a live and serious issue? May our salvation lie in an attempt to recover our Christian heritage, not in the sense of going back to the past but of discovering in the central affirmations and insights of the Christian faith new spiritual energies to regenerate and vitalise our sick society? Does not the public repudiation of the whole Christian scheme of life in a large part of what was once known as Christendom force to the front the question whether the path of wisdom is not rather to attempt to work out a Christian doctrine of modern society and to order our national life in accordance with it?[100]

Those who would give a quick, easy or confident answer to this question have failed to understand it. It cannot even be seriously considered without a profound awareness of the extent to which Christian ideas have lost their hold over, or faded from the consciousness of, large sections of the population; of the far-reaching changes that would be called for in the structure, institutions and activities of existing society, which is in many of its features a complete denial of the Christian understanding of the meaning and end of man's existence; and of the stupendous and costly spiritual, moral and intellectual effort that any genuine attempt to order the national life in accordance with the Christian understanding of life would demand. Realistically viewed the task is so far beyond the present capacity of our

British Christianity that I write as a fool. But if the will were there, I believe that the first steps to be taken are fairly clear. The presupposition of all else, however, is the recognition that nothing short of a really heroic effort will avail to save mankind from its present evils and the destruction which must follow in their train.

I am, Sir,
Yours etc.
(Signed) J. H. OLDHAM

POSTSCRIPT

A distinguished theologian, who has been so kind as to read the proofs of this book, has made criticisms of which I should have liked to avail myself by a thorough revision of the text.[101] He has allowed me to quote the following passage from his criticism, which the reader may find helpful in correcting some of the defects of my presentation:

> The main theses of this book seem to me so important, and their application so urgently necessary, that I want to call attention to two points which I think need further emphasis, lest the point of the argument should be missed.
>
> A main part of the problem, as regards the actual Church and its existing members, is the defective realisation among us of the fundamental fact that Christianity is primarily a Gospel-message, a dogma, a belief about God and the world and man, which demands of man a response of faith and repentance. The common failure lies in putting the human response first, and so thinking of Christianity as primarily a *religion*. Consequently there is among us a tendency to view the problems of the day in the light of what is practically possible, rather than in the light of what is imposed by the principles of that truth to which the Church is set to bear witness.
>
> Secondly, there is a general vagueness about "the Community of Christians." I fear the phrase will be interpreted to mean nice Christianly-minded people of the upper middle class (p. 61). But the Community of Christians ought to mean those who are gathered into unity in the sacramental life of the visible Church: and this community in the life of faith ought to be producing something of a common mind about the questions of the day. It cannot indeed be assumed that the mind of the Community of Christians is truly reflected in the ecclesiastical

pronouncements which from time to time appear: that mind does not form itself quickly, in these matters in which it is so hard to see the way. There ought however to be, and to some real extent there is now, in the minds of Christian people a sense of the proportion of things and a spirit of discipline, which are direct fruits of the life of faith: and it is these that need to be brought to bear if the questions are to be answered in the light of Christian principles.

APPENDIX

The following broadcast talk, delivered in February 1937 in a series on "Church, Community and State," and printed in The Listener, *has some relevance to the matter of the preceding pages of this book.*

There follows the broadcast talk that was published as "The Church's Message to the World" (5.424) in *The Listener* in 1937. In *The Idea of a Christian Society*, the talk was simply headed "Appendix"; the *Listener* title – which was not of TSE's choosing – was explicitly left off, and the unauthorized insertion of subject subtitles in bold between several paragraphs as reading breaks by the BBC were deleted. Here, the text is simply reprinted as it appeared in *The Idea of a Christian Society* – without corrections from the broadcast typescript, and without the spaces between sections that were probably a holdover from the deleted subtitles; for contextual notes, the reader may refer to the 1937 printing of the talk (5.427).

That there is an antithesis between the Church and the World is a belief we derive from the highest authority. We know also from our reading of history, that a certain tension between Church and State is desirable. When Church and State fall out completely, it is ill with the commonwealth; and when Church and State get on too well together, there is something wrong with the Church. But the distinction between the Church and the World is not so easy to draw as that between Church and State. Here we mean not any one communion or ecclesiastical organisation but the whole number of Christians as Christians; and we mean not any particular State, but the whole of society, the world over, in its secular aspect. The antithesis is not simply between two opposed groups of individuals: every individual is himself a field in which the forces of the Church and the world struggle.

By "the Church's message to the World" you might think that what was meant was only the business of the Church to go on talking. I should like to make it more urgent by expanding the title to "the Church's business to interfere with the World." What is often assumed, and it is a principle that I wish to oppose, is the principle of live-and-let-live. It is assumed that if the State leaves the Church alone, and to some extent protects it from molestation, then the Church has no right to interfere with the organisation of society, or with the conduct of those who deny its beliefs. It is assumed that any such interference would be the oppression of the majority by a minority. Christians must take a very different view of their duty. But before suggesting *how* the Church should interfere with the World, we must try to answer the question: *why* should it interfere with the World?

It must be said bluntly that between the Church and the World there is no permanent *modus vivendi* possible. We may unconsciously draw a false analogy between the position of the Church in a secular society and the position of a dissenting sect in a Christian society. The situation is very different. A dissenting minority in a Christian society can persist because of the fundamental beliefs it has in common with that society, because of a common morality and of common grounds of Christian action. Where there is a different morality there is conflict. I do not mean that the Church exists primarily for the propagation of Christian morality: morality is a means and not an end. The Church exists for the glory of God and the sanctification of souls: Christian morality is part of the means by which these ends are to be attained. But because Christian morals are based on fixed beliefs which cannot change they also are essentially unchanging: while the beliefs and in consequence the morality of the secular world can change from individual to individual, or from generation to generation, or from nation to nation. To accept two ways of life in the same society, one for the Christian and another for the rest, would be for the Church to abandon its task of evangelising the world. For the more alien the non-Christian world becomes, the more difficult becomes its conversion.

The Church is not merely for the elect – in other words, those whose temperament brings them to that belief and that behaviour. Nor does it allow us to be Christian in some social relations and non-Christian in others. It wants everybody, and it wants each individual as a whole. It therefore must struggle for a condition of society which will give the maximum of opportunity for us to lead wholly Christian lives, and the maximum of

opportunity for others to become Christians. It maintains the paradox that while we are each responsible for our own souls, we are all responsible for all other souls, who are, like us, on their way to a future state of heaven or hell. And – another paradox – as the Christian attitude towards peace, happiness and well-being of peoples is that they are a means and not and end in themselves, Christians are more deeply committed to realising these ideals than are those who regard them as ends in themselves.

Now, *how* is the Church to interfere in the World? I do not propose to take up the rest of my time by denouncing Fascism and Communism. This task has been more ably performed by others, and the conclusions may be taken for granted. By pursuing this charge, I might obtain from you a kind of approval that I do not want. I suspect that a good deal of the dislike of these philosophies in this country is due to the wrong reasons as well as the right, and is coloured with complacency and sanctimony. It is easy, safe and pleasant to criticise foreigners; and it has the advantage of distracting attention from the evils of our own society. We must distinguish also between our opposition to *ideas* and our disapproval of *practices*. Both Fascism and Communism have fundamental ideas which are incompatible with Christianity. But in practice, a Fascist or a Communist State might realise its idea more or less, and it might be more or less tolerable. And on the other hand, the practices, or others equally objectionable, might easily intrude themselves into a society nominally attached to quite different principles. We need not assume that our form of constitutional democracy is the only one suitable for a Christian people, or that it is in itself a guarantee against an anti-Christian world. Instead of merely condemning Fascism and Communism, therefore, we might do well to consider that we also live in a mass-civilisation following many wrong ambitions and wrong desires, and that if our society renounces completely its obedience to God, it will become no better, and possibly worse, than some of those abroad which are popularly execrated.

By "the world," then, I mean for my present purpose particularly the world in this island. The influence of the Church can be exerted in several ways. It may oppose, or it may support, particular actions at particular times. It is acclaimed when it supports any cause that is already assured of a good deal of secular support: it is attacked, quite naturally, when it opposes anything that people think they want. Whether people say that the Church ought to interfere, or whether they say it ought to mind its own business, depends mostly on whether they agree or disagree with its attitude upon

the issue of the moment. A very difficult problem arises whenever there is occasion for the Church to resist any innovation – either in legislation or in social practice – which is contrary to Christian principles. To those who deny, or do not fully accept, Christian doctrine, or who wish to interpret it according to their private lights such resistance often appears oppressive.[102†] To the unreasoning mind the Church can often be made to appear to be the enemy of progress and enlightenment. The Church may not always be strong enough to resist successfully: but I do not see how it can ever accept as a permanent settlement one law for itself and another for the world.

I do not wish, however, to pursue the question of the kinds of issue which may arise from time to time. I want to suggest that a task for the Church in our age is a more profound scrutiny of our society, which shall start from the question: to what depth is the foundation of our society not merely neutral but positively anti-Christian?

It ought not to be necessary for me to insist that the final aims of the churchman, and the aims of the secular reformer, are very different. So far as the aims of the latter are for true social justice, they ought to be comprehended in those of the former. But one reason why the lot of the secular reformer or revolutionist seems to me to be the easier is this: that for the most part he conceives of the evils of the world as something external to himself. They are thought of either as completely impersonal, so that there is nothing to alter but machinery; or if there is evil *incarnate*, it is always incarnate in the *other people* – a class, a race, the politicians, the bankers, the armament makers, and so forth – never in oneself. There are individual exceptions: but so far as a man sees the need for converting *himself* as well as the World, he is approximating to the religious point of view. But for most people, to be able to simplify issues so as to see only the definite external enemy, is extremely exhilarating, and brings about the bright eye and the springy step that go so well with the political uniform. This is an exhilaration that the Christian must deny himself. It comes from an artificial stimulant bound to have bad after-effects. It causes pride, either individual or collective, and pride brings its own doom. For only in humility, charity and purity – and most of all perhaps humility – can we be prepared to receive the grace of God without which human operations are vain.

It is not enough simply to see the evil and injustice and suffering of this world, and precipitate oneself into action. We must know, what only theology can tell us, why these things are wrong. Otherwise, we may right some wrongs at the cost of creating new ones. If this is a world in which I, and the

majority of my fellow-beings, live in that perpetual distraction from God which exposes us to the one great peril, that of final and complete alienation from God after death, there is some wrong that I must try to help to put right. If there is any profound immorality to which we are all committed as a condition of living in society at all, that is a matter of the gravest concern to the Church. I am neither a sociologist nor an economist, and in any case it would be inappropriate, in this context, to produce any formula for setting the world right. It is much more the business of the Church to say what is wrong, that is, what is inconsistent with Christian doctrine, than to propose particular schemes of improvement. What is right enters the realm of the *expedient* and is contingent upon place and time, the degree of culture, the temperament of a people. But the Church can say what is always and everywhere *wrong*. And without this firm assurance of first principles which it is the business of the Church to repeat in and out of season, the World will constantly confuse the *right* with the expedient. In a society based on the use of slave labour men tried to prove from the Bible that slavery was something ordained by God. For most people, the actual constitution of Society, or that which their more generous passions wish to bring about, is right, and Christianity must be adapted to it. But the Church cannot be, in any political sense, either conservative, or liberal, or revolutionary. Conservatism is too often conservation of the wrong things; liberalism a relaxation of discipline; revolution a denial of the permanent things.

Perhaps the dominant vice of our time, from the point of view of the Church, will be proved to be Avarice. Surely there is something wrong in our attitude towards money. The acquisitive, rather than the creative and spiritual instincts, are encouraged. The fact that money is always forthcoming for the purpose of making more money, whilst it is so difficult to obtain for purposes of exchange, and for the needs of the most needy, is disturbing to those who are not economists. I am by no means sure that it is right for me to improve my income by investing in the shares of a company, making I know not what, operating perhaps thousands of miles away, and in the control of which I have no effective voice – but which is recommended as a sound investment. I am still less sure of the morality of my being a moneylender:[103†] that is, of investing in bonds and debentures. I know that it is wrong for me to speculate: but where the line is to be drawn between speculation and what is called legitimate investment is by no means clear. I seem to be a petty usurer in a world manipulated largely by big usurers.

And I know that the Church once condemned these things. And I believe that modern war is chiefly caused by some immorality of competition which is always with us in times of "peace"; and that until this evil is cured, no leagues or disarmaments or collective security or conferences or conventions or treaties will suffice to prevent it.

Any machinery, however beautiful to look at and however wonderful a product of brains and skill, can be used for bad purposes as well as good: and this is as true of social machinery as of constructions of steel. I think that, more important than the invention of a new machine, is the creation of a temper of mind in people[104†] such that they can learn to use a new machine rightly. More important still at the moment would be the diffusion of knowledge of what is wrong – *morally* wrong – and of *why* it is wrong. We are all dissatisfied with the way in which the world is conducted: some believe that it is a misconduct in which we all have some complicity; some believe that if we trust ourselves entirely to politics, sociology or economics we shall only shuffle from one makeshift to another. And here is the perpetual message of the Church: to affirm, to teach and to apply, true theology. We cannot be satisfied to be Christians at our devotions and merely secular reformers all the rest of the week, for there is one question that we need to ask ourselves every day and about whatever business. The Church has perpetually to answer this question: to what purpose were we born? What is the end of Man?

NOTES

1. Sir William Spens was Master of Corpus Christi College from 1927 to 1952. He corresponded with TSE regarding the subject of the three lectures, but he was in South Africa during the winter term and was unable to attend the talks. Kenneth Pickthorn – *Criterion* reviewer and President of Corpus Christi – acted as TSE's host for the three successive weeks (Feb-Mar 1939).

Though he did not begin writing the talks until late in 1938, sometime before July of the same year TSE had accepted the invitation to deliver the Boutwood Lectures, a series named for Arthur Boutwood (1864-1924), a civil servant who wrote prolifically and pseudonymously (as "Ignotus" or "Hakluyt Egerton") on conservative politics. TSE wrote the lectures with the events of Sept 1938 – the Munich Agreement, in which the Sudetenland was ceded to an increasingly belligerent Hitler – weighing heavily on his mind. He wrote to George Every: "I am very diffident of my competence to address an audience on the subject 'The Idea of a Christian State,' but my outline has the Master's (i.e. Spens) approval. I do not find any of the classical treatises very pertinent, as I am aiming at discussing the contemporary situation in its novelty, and these authors assume a state of affairs which is very different. A few pages in the *Kingdom of God* very stimulating, but Coleridge seems mostly irrelevant. Better perhaps to take Hooker (with references to Hobbes

and Warburton) as the point de repère to which to contrast the present situation, so far as I need to orientate the argument at all towards the immediate past" (23 Nov 1938).

Before its publication on 26 Oct 1939, *The Idea of a Christian Society* was advertised in Faber's catalog – the autumn list – with a description probably penned by TSE. The catalog text was used for the dust-jacket blurb of the volume, with the exception of this final sentence: "Remembering the title of an earlier pamphlet by the same author [*Thoughts after Lambeth*], we might refer to this essay as 'Thoughts after September 1938.'" This subtitle also appeared in a notice in the *New Statesman and Nation* (14 Oct 1939, 530), though the subtitle was dropped before publication.

2. Christopher Dawson, *Beyond Politics*, New York: Sheed & Ward, 1939; John Middleton Murry, *The Price of Leadership*, London: Student Christian Movement Press, 1939; V. A. Demant, *The Religious Prospect*, London: Frederick Muller, 1939; Jacques Maritain, *Humanisme intégral*, Paris: Fernand Aubier, 1936/1946, translated as *True Humanism* by M. R. Adamson, London: Geoffrey Bles, 1938/1939.

3. From a review of Peter F. Drucker's *The End of Economic Man* (1939), under the heading "Views and Reviews / Is Economics Finished?" (13 July 1939), 205-06; here 205.

4. This first chapter was published separately under the title "The Idea of a Christian Society" in *Purpose*, 11 (July/Sept 1939), 162-74, for inclusion in the journal's ongoing "Symposium," with a prefatory note by literary editor Desmond Hawkins: "We are interrupting this series in order to interpolate an additional contribution by Mr. Eliot to be published in the autumn. We welcome the opportunity to include this essay, as it is highly germane to the subject under discussion" (162). In the "Symposium," announced in the Apr-June 1938 issue, writers were invited to address cultural questions that informed "the literary mood of to-day," which "implies an abandonment of the nineteenth-century ethos, which was formulated by a triumphant middle-class as Liberalism in politics and Humanism in ethics, in philosophy, in religion as well as literature" (108). TSE's chapter was preceded by the contributions of Ezra Pound, Michael Roberts, E. W. F. Tomlin, and George Every, and followed by those of Middleton Murry and Allen Tate. TSE's notes were not included. Substantive emendations between the two texts are indicated by a dagger in the textual notes.

5†. In *Purpose*: "will be the ones to return to plague us."

6*. For TSE's note, see "In using the term 'Idea' . . ." (5.718).

7†. In *Purpose*: "express it"

8*. For TSE's note, see "Christian sociologists" (5.718).

9†. In *Purpose*: "commerce and credit"

10†. In *Purpose*: "For I beg that before we consider what should be the relation of Church and State, we should first ask: 'What State?'"

11†. In *Purpose*, the remainder of this paragraph does not appear.

12†. In *Purpose*: "prosperity in this world has become the sole conscious aim of the individual."

13†. In *Purpose*: "would unhesitatingly prefer Christianity."

14. In the Merovingian, or Frankish, empire (ca. 476-750), a mayor of the palace (*major palatii*) served as an administrator of a kingdom. In many instances, a mayor's increasing acquisition of control superseded the king whom he nominally served.

15. "Democracy has quite abandoned the unfriendly and suspicious attitude to the State that was characteristic of Liberalism. It no longer attempts to confine its activities to the external

relations of life – the preservation of peace and order – and to guard jealously against State intervention in social and economic life. It still rejects the paternalism of the old authoritarian Christian State, but it is quite ready to treat the State as a sort of universal aunt and to welcome its intrusion into the most intimate relations of life" (103).

16†. In *Purpose*: "I do not dispute his prediction,"

17. Two years later, TSE would publish *The Dry Salvages*, with its reminiscent images of departure and destination: "You are not the same people who left that station / Or who will arrive at any terminus . . . You are not those who saw the harbour / Receding, or those who will disembark" (*CPP* 188; *Poems1* 197-98).

18. *Trans*: statism

19. In his Apr 1937 *Criterion* "Commentary," TSE discusses the decline of the birthrate (5.467).

20*. For TSE's note, see "Totalitarianism can retain . . . " (5.719).

21†. In *Purpose*: "can have two results. It may lead

22*. *Trans*: against the grain, backwards; for TSE's note, see "Imitation *à rebours*" (5.719).

23†. In *Purpose*: "it is this disorder, for which we all have responsibility,"

24†. In *Purpose*: "And I suggest that the fundamental"

25*. For TSE's note, see "Fascist doctrine" (5.720).

26*. For TSE's note, see "The red herring of the German national religion" (5.720).

27. There was no "German national religion" in a traditional or sociological sense. In the late 1930s, the three formally recognized churches were the Evangelische Kirche A.B. (Augsburgischen Bekenntnisses – what English speakers would know as "Lutheran"); the Evangelische Kirche H.B. (Helvetischen Bekenntnisses – the Swiss variant, or Calvinist legacy); and the Roman Catholic Church. The closest organization to a "German national church" was the Deutsche Evangelische Kirche (known in English as the National Reich Church), a Nazi-affiliated organization that the regime hoped would absorb the other Protestant and Catholic churches; this outcome did not occur, and the regime dropped the matter after 1937. As TSE indicates in his notes at the end of the lectures, he is referring to the German Faith Movement (Deutsche Glaubensbewegung), founded by Jakob Wilhelm Hauer (1881-1962), and which fused pagan, occult, and Hindu elements with Nazi ideology. Attempting to position the movement as the national religion, Hauer's lectures and book, *The German Faith Movement* – from which TSE quotes extensively in his Notes – are propaganda, billing the movement as expanding and unstoppable; however, it was always a small organization that never received broad popular support and never caught the attention of the Nazi authorities, who were involved in their own schemes for Christian unification.

28*. For TSE's note, see "Hygienic morality" (5.721).

29*. For TSE's note, see "It may be opportune . . ." (5.721).

30*. For TSE's note, see "The Community of Christians" (5.723).

31. A concordat is an agreement, usually between the Vatican and a secular state, regarding matters that pertain to both. Responding to page proofs of Christopher Dawson's *Beyond Politics*, TSE writes to Dawson regarding the difference between concordats and the arrangement between the Church of England and the British government: "you seem to include every variety of association of Church and State in the category of concordat; but is not a concordat a very particular form of relation between Church and State, and must not the position of the

Anglican Church here and that of the Lutheran Church in Sweden be considered as quite different? I do not wish to minimise the evils or abuses which are ordinarily found in Established Churches, but they seem to me different from those which may follow from a concordatory relationship" (23 Jan 1939).

32. TSE had referred to this unverified quotation in "The Christian in the Modern World" (5.191). In vol 3 of *The Endless Adventure* (London: Macmillan, 1935) the Scots political writer and historian F. S. Oliver cites the German statesman Prince Bernhard von Bülow as the source of "this saying, which he attributes to Disraeli" (143).

33. *Trans*: "virtuous life is the end of human society," Thomas Aquinas, *De regno*, I.15. The full quotation is "virtuosa igitur [therefore] vita est congregationis humanae finis." TSE derived this quotation from Marcel Demongeot's *Le Meilleur Régime politique selon Saint Thomas*. Responding to a review of *The Idea of a Christian Society*, TSE remarks: "I am indebted to the author directly and also to his quotations from the master" (5.753).

34. Pope Pius XI had died on 10 Feb 1939. In his first encyclical, *Ubi arcano* (1922), he had lamented the chaos and hopelessness in the wake of the war, locating the ultimate cause in a drift away from faith: "There is over and above the absence of peace and the evils attendant on this absence, another deeper and more profound cause for present-day conditions. This cause was even beginning to show its head before the War and the terrible calamities consequent on that cataclysm should have proven a remedy for them if mankind had only taken the trouble to understand the real meaning of those terrible events. In the Holy Scriptures we read: 'They that have forsaken the Lord, shall be consumed.' . . . These words of the Holy Bible have been fulfilled and are now at this very moment being fulfilled before our very eyes. Because men have forsaken God and Jesus Christ, they have sunk to the depths of evil" (27-28).

35. TSE links Ruskin and Arthur Joseph Penty (1875-1937) as critics of machinery in his Lecture Notes for English 26 (4.766). Writing often for *The New Age*, Penty was an advocate of guild socialism and an enemy of progressivism and industrial society. These concerns are on view in his Oct 1931 *Criterion* essay "Means and Ends" (1-24), an abstract of his book-length work, *Means and Ends* (1932), which was reviewed by Rev. Charles Smyth in the July 1932 *Criterion* (727-31).

36. In *On the Constitution of the Church and State* (London: William Pickering, 1839), Coleridge defines the clerisy as comprehending "the learned of all denominations, the sages and professors of the law and jurisprudence, of medicine and physiology, of music, of military and civil architecture, of the physical sciences, with the mathematical as the common organ of the preceding; in short, all the so called liberal arts and sciences, the possession and application of which constitute the civilization of a country, as well as the theological" (49). The purpose of the clerisy is "to form and train up the people of the country to be obedient, free, useful, organizable subjects, citizens, and patriots, living to the benefit of the State, and prepared to die for its defence" (58).

Middleton Murry's use of the term "clerisy" occurs in his paper read at the Moot in 1938, "Towards a Christian Theory of Society": "The Church, the visible Church, is composed of (1) *All* members of the national Christian society other than the priesthood, (2) The priesthood – understood according to Coleridge's idea of 'the clerisy' – i.e. including *all* members of the society whose ideal function is educative or pastoral" (quoted in Roger Kojecky's *T. S. Eliot's Social Criticism* [New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1972, 166]). Middleton Murry's *The*

Price of Leadership revives Coleridge and Dr. Thomas Arnold on clerisy: "In such a democratic Christian commonwealth the nation would be, as Dr. Arnold had demanded, coextensive with the Church; and the narrow conception of the ecclesiastical Church would be expanded to correspond with what Coleridge had discerned to be its true 'idea' – the 'clerisy' within the national society whose primary function was the education of the citizens of the commonwealth into a knowledge of their obligations and privileges as members of a Christian community" (140).

TSE returned to the idea of the clerisy in a 1944 paper written for the Moot: "On the Place and Function of the Clerisy" (6.553).

37. Glossing in a note the roles of "pastor, presbyter, or parson," Coleridge writes regarding "their duties and rights, of their hopes, privileges and requisite qualifications, as moral persons, and not merely living things. But this the pastoral clergy cannot be other than imperfectly; they cannot be that which it is the paramount end and object of their establishment and distribution throughout the country that they should be – each in his sphere the germ and *nucleus* of the progressive civilization – unless they are in the rule married men and heads of families" (56 n.).

In addition to preferring a married priesthood, Coleridge warns against the foreign ecclesiastical influence of Rome: "The Clerisy, or National Church, being an estate of the realm, the Church and State, with the King as the sovereign head of both, constituting the body politic, . . . it follows by immediate consequence, that of the qualifications and preconditions for the trusteeship, absolutely to be required of the order collectively, and of every individual person as the conditions of his admission into this order, . . . the first and most indispensable, that without which all others are null and void, is, that the national Clergy and every member of the same from the highest to the lowest, shall be fully and exclusively citizens of the State, neither acknowledging the authority, nor within the influence, of any other state in the world; – full and undistracted subjects of this kingdom, and in no capacity, and under no pretences, owning any other earthly sovereign or visible head but the King" (80-81).

38. Coleridge complains of "the ignorance, grossness, excessive number and poverty of the lower ecclesiastics themselves, the religious orders included" (147), later inveighing against the abuses of "1. The Cardinals. 2. The excessive number of the Priests and other ecclesiastics. 3. The Regulars, Mendicant Orders, Jesuits, and the rest" (149).

39*. For TSE's note, see "Christian Education" (5.723).

40. TSE discusses educational theory and its relation to the political and social organization of society in "Modern Education and the Classics" (5.337).

41*. For TSE's note, see "The Community of Christians" (5.722).

42. TSE addressed the issue of censorship in his *Criterion* "Commentary" for Apr 1930 (4.90) and in his 1935 lecture "Should There Be a Censorship of Books?" (5.263).

43*. For TSE's note, see "Uniformity of Culture" (5.723).

44. Rejecting a humanism that is not "integral" – namely, the secular humanist culture that denies the spiritual dimension – Maritain proposes a definition of pluralism rooted in subsidiarity (an idea indebted to the papal encyclical *Quadragesimo anno*) and cooperation: "In opposition to the various totalitarian conceptions of the State which are to-day in vogue, this is a question of the conception of a *pluralist commonweal*, which will gather together in its organic unity a diversity of social groupings and structures which embody positive liberties. 'It is an injustice, a grave evil and a disturbance of right order for a larger and higher organisation to

arrogate to itself functions which can be performed efficiently by smaller and lower bodies' [*Quadragesimo anno*, 79]. Civil society is not only made up of individuals, but of social groupings formed of these; and a pluralist commonweal would give the fullest possible measure of autonomy to these groupings and diversify its own internal structure in accord with the typical claims of their nature" (*True Humanism*, 157-58).

45*. For TSE's note, see "Advocates of Disestablishment" (5.725).

46. The Welsh Church Act 1914, passed by Parliament, disestablished the Church of England in Wales and Monmouthshire, and reallocated some church property to the University of Wales and other local authorities. The outbreak of war suspended practical movement on the matter, and in 1920 the Church in Wales was formed as a province of the Anglican communion, though it did not become an established church.

47. TSE here refers to the theology of Karl Barth, whose early works, particularly *Epistle to the Romans* (1919, 1922), had theorized a stark division between the divine will of God and human agency as found in culture, politics, and religion. The English translation of Barth's *Epistle to the Romans* (1933) was reviewed in the *Criterion* of Jan 1934 by Norman W. Porteous, who describes the "question at issue" in Barth's text as "not whether God exists but what we must do in view of the abyss between man and God which the witness has revealed" (343). On 5 Sept 1934, TSE wrote to Geoffrey Curtis: "It is possible that my very superficial acquaintance with Barthian theology is from the wrong end. That is, I got the impression that it was a movement back to Luther; that as a counter-reformation of Liberal Protestantism it was all to the good; but that it had little to offer to the less Protestant minded, and indeed held dangers in stressing the chasm between the spiritual and the temporal order. In fact, the Bishop of Stepney asked me if I had been influenced by Barth because he thought that I was emphasising the division of 'Church' and 'World' to such an extent!"

48. Erastianism, named after the sixteenth-century Swiss theologian Thomas Erastus, is the doctrine that asserts the authority of the state over the church in ecclesiastical jurisdiction.

49*. For TSE's note, see "The dangers of a nationalistic Church" (5.726).

On the question of a national church's relation to the universal church, TSE received a letter from his old Harvard professor of Latin, Edward "Ken" Rand: "One consideration bore in upon me poignantly as I read the first part of these essays. The different antinomies and perplexities which you subtly diagnose in the present state of our spiritual health would seem to prove the necessity of a Universal Church. This changes its accidents, but not its essence, in the different countries in which it exists. It renders to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, assuming that Caesar may show a very different face in different quarters of the world. For this reason, there can be no 'national church,' and what is that church today but the Church of Rome? No, I have not gone over" (12 Dec 1939).

50. In 1588, the Spanish Armada was sent by the Catholic King Philip II to depose Queen Elizabeth I, to restore Roman Catholicism, and to end the disruption of Spanish trade by English piracy.

Charles Kingsley's historical novel *Westward Ho!* (1855) idealizes the English victories over the Armada and vituperates Roman Catholicism.

51. In chronological order: the World Missionary Conference (Edinburgh, 1910) launched the ecumenical movement within Protestant Christianity. The Malines Conversations (1921-27) dealt with ecclesial relations between the Roman Catholic Church and the Church of

England. The Universal Christian Conference on Life and Work, an ecumenical meeting on social issues, was held in Stockholm in 1925. Lausanne hosted the first World Conference on Faith and Order in 1927; its second conference was held in Edinburgh in 1937. The World Conference on Church, Community and State was held at Oxford in July 1937, where TSE gave an address as a delegate, "The Church as an Ecumenical Society" (5.497).

52*. For TSE's note, see "Wave of revivalism" (5.727).

53. In the *Times* reporting on world affairs and agriculture, the topic of soil erosion saw a dramatic increase starting in 1934. (The Soil Erosion Service had been created in the US in 1933.) Shortly before TSE turned his attention to writing the lectures, there appeared in the *Times* of 28 Oct 1938 an article with the headline "Australia's Lost Land / Soil Erosion / The Retribution of Nature" (9). In Apr 1939, Faber published Graham Jacks and Robert Whyte's *The Rape of the Earth: A World Survey of Soil Erosion*, which brought the problem of soil erosion before a wider public. Although it was published after TSE gave the lectures, it was widely reviewed between Apr and Oct when *ICS* was published, and TSE would have been aware of the book in draft form.

54. In his introduction to *Revelation*, TSE was critical of Lawrence's *Mornings in Mexico*: Lawrence, according to TSE, believed in "a world in which religion would be something deeper than belief, in which life would be a kind of religious behaviourism. Hence the prancing Indians, who, in *Mornings in Mexico*, inspired some of his finest and most brilliant writing. He wished to go as low as possible in the scale of human consciousness, in order to find something that he could assure himself was *real*. // The attempt is fundamentally chimerical. We do not feel that Lawrence really got inside the skin of his Hopis, nor would we wish him to do so, because he was a civilized and sensitively conscious man, and his Indians, one feels, are pretty stupid" (5.743).

55. Prior to this observation, TSE's most recent discussion of the malleability of democracy occurs in his Oct 1937 "Commentary" for the *Criterion* (5.562).

56*. For TSE's note, see "I have permission to reprint . . ." (5.729).

57. After Germany's invasion of Poland on 1 Sept 1939, Great Britain declared war on 3 Sept.

58. With the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, signed on 23 Aug 1939, Germany had concluded a non-aggression contract with the Soviet Union, whose army would invade Poland from the east two weeks after Germany's maneuver. Thus, at the time of TSE's postscript, the "alignment of forces" at the beginning of the war was France and Great Britain (with a number of its Dominions quickly falling in line) against Germany, with Italy aligned by treaty with the Axis powers – though not yet belligerent – and the Soviet Union ostensibly pledged to neutrality, though secretly involved in dividing Europe into spheres of influence, anticipating future Nazi and Soviet control.

59. TSE refers to the Treaty of Versailles at the conclusion of World War I.

60. While these original page indicators do not apply to this critical edition, the editors have decided to keep them not only for historical reasons but because they serve as a kind of introductory formula to each note. TSE's original page numbers are followed by the page reference in brackets to the present text.

61. Richard Henry Tawney (1880-1962), economist, ethicist, educational theorist, and Christian socialist; his most influential works of social criticism include *The Acquisitive Society* (1920), *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism* (1926), and *Equality* (1931).

62. London: Faber & Faber, 1936.

63. In his personal copy of Demant's text, TSE has underlined the word "represents" and written in the margin: "but in a sense it must represent all citizens."

64. The letter is dated "April 24," but it appeared in the *Times* on 27 Apr under the heading "General Fuller and Democracy." John Frederick Charles "Boney" Fuller (1878-1966) was a retired major general, active in fascist causes, and a prolific author of military history and theory. His letter begins: "Sir, – In *The Times* of April 19 you correctly state that I was one of the two British visitors who, having received private invitations from Herr Hitler, attended his birthday celebrations" (12).

65. "But since in recent years Bolshevism has been accepted by the pluto-mobocracies as a respectable cult, now that in another campaign I have set out to place duty to the nation before individual rights, I am called a 'Fascist,' to which I have no objection when 'British' is placed before this at present popular expression of abuse, because Fascism has borrowed greatly from the true and noble philosophy of Mazzini" (12).

66. Page 3; the parentheses in the quotation are TSE's editorial insertion.

67. The ideal state recommended by *Quadragesimo anno* (1931) is based on solidarity and subsidiarity. The encyclical reaffirms the earlier social encyclical, *Rerum novarum* (1891), which promoted corporatism as a way to safeguard workers' rights to safety, rest, and a fair wage. Though the more recent encyclical acknowledges criticisms of "new syndical and corporative order," it is approved as a mode by which workers and employers may "coordinate their activities in matters of common interest toward one and the same end" (*Quadragesimo anno*, 95, 93).

68. *Germany's New Religion: The German Faith Movement*, by (Jakob) Wilhelm Hauer, Karl Heim, and Karl Adam, trans. T. S. K. Scott-Craig and R. E. Davies. Hauer's contribution comprises three chapters. Karl Heim's chapter on Lutheranism is entitled "Responsibility and Destiny: The Difference between Hauer's View and the Message of the Bible and the Reformers" (TSE refers to Heim's work in his *Criterion* "Commentary" of Oct 1932 [4.498]). The chapter by Karl Adam (1876-1966) is entitled "Jesus Christ and the Spirit of the Age."

69. Page 9; this quotation comes from the translators' introduction, not Hauer's chapters.

70. "A second focal point [of the German Faith Movement] is the life and teaching of Eckhart. Eckhart is one of the greatest of the essentially German masters of life and thought. Soon after Christianity had achieved external success, he won an inward victory over the alien, through the strength of his German nature – however much he still moved within the sphere of Christian imagery and thought-forms, and however little he was conscious of the fact that he really was not a Christian at all" [38]. In their introduction, the translators describe Eckhart as follows: "Meister Eckhart, of whom a great deal will be heard in these pages, the mystic of the fourteenth century, condemned by the Catholic Church as a heretic and later reinstated, is the first prominent member of the immanentist school in Germany" (10-11).

71. "We have no intention of making genuine Christians question their Christianity, for it has always been the German way to let every man's religious belief alone" (43).

72. "We have not got our faith from books, or from sacred scriptures . . . but from personal experience. This is shown by the fact that it is not the mass of intellectuals which is streaming over to us, but multitudes of ordinary people, who are not looking for the theological pedantries of professors, but for Life" (51-52).

73. *Read*: "every great figure who soars above the centuries" (80).

74. Paris: Librairie Plon, 1939; *trans*: The anarchy of morals and authoritarian hygiene act in much the same way: they disappoint the need for passion, whether inherited or acquired through culture; they relax its intimate and personal energies.

75. TSE addresses the issues of just war theory and Christian pacifism in his 1935 lecture "The Christian in the Modern World" (5.185); in his July 1936 *Criterion* "Commentary" (5.380); and his Oct 1936 "Commentary" (5.394).

76. A vocal critic of the generally popular Spanish-American War, Norton was denounced bitterly by the press.

77. TSE's parenthetic page reference is in error. The original reference to "superior intellectual and/or spiritual gifts" had appeared on p. 37, not p. 20.

78. 5.337

79. "Hitherto the children of this world have shown themselves not only wiser but also more capable of self-discipline and devotion than the children of light. The Machiavellian virtue of the statesman, low as it may be, has been a real thing, whereas the higher ideals of the humanist and the philosopher have been bloodless phantoms which were not strong enough to arouse passionate devotion or effectual action" (27).

80. In his "Commentary" of Oct 1934, TSE praises the preservation work of the National Trust while questioning the society that relies upon such makeshift organizations because it does not understand the direction or the forces of its growth and cannot articulate the criteria it uses to preserve or destroy (5.132).

The Society for the Preservation of Ancient Buildings was inaugurated in 1877 by William Morris and other Pre-Raphaelites. This society worked along different lines than other preservation societies; it promoted skillful repair instead of what it considered destructive restoration, preferring that the accretions of a building's history be preserved rather than erased to create an idealized past.

Founded in 1811, The National Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church in England and Wales – often referred to as the National Society – did not preserve buildings but the Anglican tradition of elementary education; its original function was to promote Christian education and church schools among the poor.

81. Herbert Hensley Henson, *Cui Bono?: An Open Letter to Lord Halifax on the Present Crisis in the Church of England* (1898) and *Disestablishment: The Charge Delivered at the Second Quadrennial Visitation of his Diocese, together with an Introduction* (1929).

82. In his "Commentary" of Jan 1937, TSE had been critical of Henson's use of language in his letter to the *Times* (5.413).

83. "[F]or Coleridge, the national society of England was, essentially, a spiritual society. The pregnant hints of Coleridge's thought fell on good ground in Arnold's mind, and grew into an original theory of English society. . . . For Coleridge and Arnold the assumption by the King of England of the headship of the Church of England was as it were the Magna Charta of a new Christian society. It meant that the Church in England was henceforward identical with the nation" (111).

84. Murry 162; Matthew Arnold, "Manning and the Catholic Reaction of our Times," *The Edinburgh Review*, July 1896, 1-36; here 35.

85. *Read*: "we chiefly owe the enviable tradition of the English Civil Service: and all that spirit of disinterestedness . . ." (61-62).

86. Dr. Arnold's reform "was essentially a religious reform of English education. No doubt the strength of the religious impulse was weakened with the process of time" (61).

87. "What we should aim at is a 'democratization' of the public schools: that is to say, their bodily incorporation into the state-educational system of this country" (58).

88. "For Dr. Arnold, the notion that the Church in England consisted of the clergy was entirely retrogressive; so was the belief that the validity of the Church lay in the fact of apostolic succession" (111).

89. Hilary J. Carpenter, O.P., "Moral Re-Armament," *Blackfriars*, 20 (Apr 1939), 248-62; H. A. Hodges, "The Meaning of Moral Re-Armament," *Theology*, May 1939, 322-32.

90. *Moral Rearmament: The Battle for Peace*, London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1938.

91. The excerpted speeches and letters – reprinted and newly composed – that fill the pamphlet were mostly signed by British nobility and gentry, government officials, and leaders of the press, though Queen Wilhelmina of the Netherlands also lent her support.

92. *Aids to Reflection in the Formation of a Manly Character on the Several Grounds of Prudence, Morality, and Religion* (1825); *The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, vol 9, ed. John Beer, Princeton: Princeton UP, 1993, 17. TSE owned the G. Bell and Sons edition (London, 1913) of this Coleridge text, where this passage is marked in the margin.

93. *Moral Rearmament: The Battle for Peace*, 9; "Moral Rearmament / The Need of the Day," *The Times*, 10 Sept 1938, 6.

94. "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." John 3: 3 (KJV).

95. "The real need of the day is therefore moral and spiritual rearmament," 9.

96. Franklin Nathaniel Daniel Buchman (1878-1961) was the founder of the Oxford Group, which by 1938 had changed its name to Moral Re-Armament (MRA) and was also known as Buchmanism. Informed by evangelical Christianity, the movement espoused four moral absolutes: purity, unselfishness, honesty, and love. The penultimate piece in Austin's pamphlet is a speech by Buchman headed by the note: "Dr. Frank N. D. Buchman, who ever since the Great War has worked ceaselessly for Moral and Spiritual Rearmament, gave the following address at the East Ham Town Hall, London, on May 1938. Four months before the Crisis, it gave content to the term 'Moral Rearmament' and was reproduced in the Press throughout the world. It is considered to have evoked the present lively interest in the subject" (62).

97. For the Pelagian heresy, see 5.756 n.5.

98. Rev. Humphry Beevor (1903-65), Anglican curate, later Bishop of Lebombo; *Peace and Pacifism*, London: Centenary Press, 1938.

Composed in 1847 by Henry Francis Lyte, the lyrics to "Abide with Me" are usually sung to the hymn tune "Eventide." It was especially popular during World War I.

In 1919, King George V issued a proclamation calling for two minutes of silence at 11:00 a.m. on 11 Nov, the moment the Armistice came into effect the preceding year. The tradition was observed in subsequent years.

99. Oldham's letter was printed under the title "Lessons of the Crisis / Western Civilization at Stake / The Christian Heritage" (15); it was prefixed by the editorial note: "In view of the exceptionally heavy volume of correspondence that has reached *The Times* on various aspects of the recent crisis the Editor regrets that it is impossible to send an acknowledgment in every case. He begs also that correspondents will be as concise as they can."

100. The differences between Oldham's letter as it appeared in the *Times* and as it appeared in *The Idea of a Christian Society* suggest that TSE was reproducing Oldham's original letter before it had been edited by the *Times*. The first two paragraphs of Oldham's letter in the *Times* appeared as follows:

> Sir, – The lessons which are being drawn from the unforgettable experiences through which we have lived during the past few days do not for the most part go deep enough. The removal of an immediate danger does not mean that effective steps have yet been taken to stem forces that threaten the disintegration of modern society. The respite that has been given us may be no more than a postponement of the day of reckoning unless we are determined to root out the cancerous growths which have brought Western civilization to the verge of complete collapse. Whether truth and justice or caprice and violence are to prevail in human affairs is a question on which the fate of mankind depends. But to equate the conflict between these opposing forces with the contrast between democracies and dictatorships, real and profound as is this difference, is a dangerous simplification of the problem. To focus on evil in others is a way of escape from the painful struggle of eradicating it from our own hearts and lives and an evasion of our real responsibilities.
>
> The basal truth is that the spiritual foundations of Western civilization have been undermined. The systems which are in the ascendant on the Continent may be regarded from one point of view as convulsive attempts to arrest the process of disintegration. What clear alternative have we in this country? The mind of England is confused and uncertain. Is it possible that in these circumstances a simple question, which some would answer in the affirmative as a matter of course, and many more regard as wholly beside the mark, might unexpectedly become a serious and live issue? May our salvation lie in an attempt to recover our Christian heritage, not in the sense of going back to the past but of discovering in the central affirmations and insights of the Christian faith new spiritual energies to regenerate and vitalize our sick society? Does not the public repudiation of the whole Christian scheme of life in a large part of what was once known as Christendom force to the front the question whether the path of wisdom is not rather to attempt to work out a Christian doctrine of modern society and to order our national life in accordance with it?

With the exception of the signature – which appears in the *Times* only as "Yours, &c., / J. H. OLDHAM" – and aside from some minor punctuation changes, the rest of the letter appears in TSE's text as it did in the *Times*.

101. The theologian was George Every, to whom TSE wrote on 8 Aug 1939: "Thank you very much for your letter of the 4th. I agree with your two criticisms, and if I cannot do anything to the text, I will put in notes to qualify and develop my statements. The second point needs a great deal more thinking than I have been able to give it."

102†. In *Listener*: private lights, such

103†. In *Listener*: money-lender

104†. In *Listener*: in a people

A Lay Theologian[1]

A review of *The Descent of the Dove: A Short History of the Holy Spirit in the Church*, by Charles Williams

London: Longmans, 1939. Pp. 245.

The New Statesman and Nation, 18 (Dec 1939) 864, 866

This book is not quite what you might expect it to be; but nothing by Mr. Charles Williams – nothing, at least, that he has written because he wanted to – ever is; and the sort of people who would object that Proteus does not observe the rules of all-in wrestling, the very literal-minded, may sometimes complain of Mr. Williams that he is playing a game of his own.[2] The easiest way to try to prove a foul is to accuse Mr. Williams of heresy. To those who believe that orthodoxy is for the Church to determine, not for the individual writer to expect to arrive at until his views have been published and tested, this will not appear a deadly accusation. One may even go so far as to maintain that a heresy from Mr. Williams would be, in its result (and Mr. Williams does assume that intelligent and educated minds exist), a real contribution to the explication of orthodoxy.

Of three classes of Mr. Williams's writings: his romantic thrillers, from *War in Heaven* to *Descent into Hell*, his later poetry, and his theological works (*He came down from Heaven* and the present book) it may be said that while they can all be enjoyed separately, they can only be partly understood unless they are considered together.[3] Even Mr. Williams himself, in his preface, seems to be aware of this.[4] *Taliessin through Logres* contained some beautiful poetry, but some of the most obscure poetry that was ever written: it becomes more intelligible after reading *The Descent of the Dove*.[5] The obscurity of the poem was partly inevitable, because the author's subject matter was difficult in itself, and difficult particularly for the present age to apprehend; it was partly innocent; but also it seemed partly wilful. There is an element of wilfulness in Mr. Williams's expression – a temptation to which anyone is exposed who is trying to convey the beauty of colour to the colour-blind. It is necessary, in any case, to collate what are superficially different kinds of work, in order to see what Mr. Williams is about; and even then, it is very difficult to classify this extraordinary and

eccentric spiritual acrobat. One may say that the centre of Mr. Williams's interest is mystical or ascetical theology: in the widest sense – for *He came down from Heaven* contains some profound remarks on Romantic Love and the *Vita Nuova*.[6] But he enjoys all the privileges of being a *lay* theologian; he can use his own form, such as that of thrillers as thrilling as any, and he can speak in the language of contemporary conversation. Indeed, it may prove that one of his greatest contributions to his science is a refreshment of the terminology in which it is expressed.

The sub-title of the present book indicates that it is in a certain sense a history of the Church. It is not, of course, a history of ecclesiastical politics or constitution. To the reader who is not interested in, or does not recognise the identity of the Holy Ghost, the book is still very interesting, as a kind of review of the points of emphasis which Mr. Williams considers important in the last nineteen hundred years: to such a reader the book will be interesting as a survey of Mr. Williams's mind. Such a reader will enjoy the review and appreciate the many good things by the way, but he will have missed the author's intention, which is to chronicle the points of crisis and decision, at which the Church (in its widest sense) has been guided by the Holy Spirit. That is to say, Mr. Williams would wish his book to be judged, not as his "personal" impression of the history of the Church, but as an essay according to criteria quite as objective as those of the ordinary historian. His standpoint is certainly not Protestant, but it is Catholic in a larger sense than that usually attributed by Protestants to Catholicism, for it allows him to consider without prejudice the contributions of heretics and schismatics, as well as those of saints and popes. Popes, indeed, have no very conspicuous place as individuals in this book, for they are not here important as occasional "great men" in the affairs of the world, but as more or less satisfactory vehicles of the Holy Spirit. On the other hand Mr. Williams's scheme allows him scope to give full value to the contribution of Montaigne, in a chapter called "The Quality of Disbelief":

> It was a quality of spirit, not clarity (though it may involve clarity), not charity (though it may lead to charity). It is a rare thing, and it may be called the quality of disbelief. It is a manner, a temperament, a nature, which may be encouraged or discouraged; it is most particularly not irony, though irony may be an element in it. It is a qualitative mode of belief rather than a quantitative denial of dogma. [189-90]

This is well said: it is a difficult saying to a positivistic age. One of Mr. Williams's most remarkable virtues of sensibility, in fact, is a capacity for understanding certain modes of feeling which have become extinct. It is a pleasure to find that this capacity of his operates on Montaigne as well as on Dante. In speaking of this "quality of disbelief" as exemplified by Lorenzo Valla,[7] he says

> Such a method has the same dangers as any other; that is, it is quite sound when a master uses it, cheapens as it becomes popular, and is unendurable when it is merely fashionable. So Augustine's predestination was safe with him, comprehensible in Calvin, tiresome in the English Puritans, and quite horrible in the Scottish presbyteries. There is no way of saving these things; even Francis of Assisi has produced, unintentionally, circles of hopeless bathos. All we can hope is that we may, by grace, recover different modes as and when they are most needed. This particular one was needed in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Our Lord the Spirit, having permitted contrition to exist, permitted sheer intelligence to exist; he inspired – one may say so – Montaigne. [191]

This passage illustrates both Mr. Williams's perceptiveness, and his tendency to be balanced and just; and, incidentally, his unconventional phraseology, in which also one observes no tiresome intention of paradox.

Whether there are any historical errors in this History of the Holy Spirit in the Church, the present reviewer is incompetent to detect: but he is sure that, if there are, they are not of importance. It might be easier to find omissions. The later history of the Eastern Church receives no attention, nor does the mysticism of Eckhart and his followers (though Boehme is mentioned for his influence upon William Law).[8] But such omissions Mr. Williams would probably be able to justify or extenuate. He gives St. John of the Cross his due place,[9] and the suggestion of the importance of the Great Schism in preparing a way for schism in the sixteenth century gives matter for much reflection.[10] This is not only a valuable book, but a very readable one for those who consider themselves outside of the Church as well as for those in it; and it has a further use in that it provides a helpful introduction to the earlier books of the same author, which have been mentioned.

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. On 13 Oct 1939, the literary editor G. W. Stonier invited TSE to review for the *New Statesman and Nation* Luigi Sturzo's *Church and State* (1939), which TSE considered but declined, requesting Williams's *The Descent of the Dove* instead. On 31 Oct, he wrote to Williams: "You are, I may say, not only a difficult author, but a difficult author to review; not only a difficult author to review, but what is less surprising and follows from the preceding, a difficult author to review for the *New Statesman*. I intend in a cover letter to the Editor to say that if he proposes to mutilate my review in any way, I shall expect him to print it anonymously, and in that event the proceeds, naturally, must be given to charity."

2. According to Greek myth, those who sought Proteus's knowledge of the past, present, and future had to wrestle the sea god into subjugation, a challenge made more difficult by Proteus's ability to shapeshift.

3. Faber & Faber published both *War in Heaven* (1930) and *Descent into Hell* (1937). *War in Heaven* recasts the Grail legend in modern-day England; *Descent into Hell* similarly weaves the supernatural with a contemporary setting as it traces the spiritual struggles of its protagonists. *He Came Down from Heaven* (1938) is the fifth installment of a series of contributions by different authors titled "I Believe: A Series of Personal Statements" published by Heinemann. The book centers on Williams's interpretation of the eponymous phrase from the Nicene Creed.

4. In his preface to *The Descent of the Dove*, Williams writes, "I may perhaps be permitted to add that the themes of this book are also discussed, from different points of view, in other books of mine – in *Descent into Hell*, *He came down from Heaven*, and *Taliessin through Logres*" (viii).

5. First published in 1938, *Taliessin through Logres* contains twenty-four Arthurian poems that develop Williams's Christian theology.

6. *He Came Down from Heaven* includes a chapter titled "The Theology of Romantic Love" in which Williams posits his theological reading of Dante's love for Beatrice in the *Vita nuova* and the *Divine Comedy*.

7. Lorenzo Valla (1407-57), an Italian humanist and rhetorician, was charged by the Inquisition with eight counts of heresy for defending Epicurean philosophy and for refusing the apostolic origins of the Apostles' Creed, among other charges. The king of Naples and Valla's patron Alfonso of Aragon intervened in the trial, however, and Valla became a papal scribe in the last years of his life.

8. Meister Eckhart, German theologian, mystic, and member of the Dominican Order; Jacob Boehme (Jakob Böhme) (1575-1624), German shoemaker and mystic; and William Law (1686-1761), English theologian. Williams insists that Law was a "disciple" of Boehme and that Law's later works "form perhaps one of the best statements of the pure Christian religion that have ever been issued" (195).

9. Williams argues of St. John of the Cross that the "great Dionysian metaphysic became to him a close and most intimate experience, the Nothing became the All; and his sayings have to be interpreted in this sense or they become dangerous." Out of his "passion for the loss of all," Williams continues, the saint experienced "some sort of transmutation of the flesh" as he died from erysipelas, making him "an epigram of Christendom" (180-81). In "Mystic and Politician as Poet," TSE remarks that the saint's use of the image of "a light which is at the same time darkness" situates him as "perhaps the greatest psychologist of all European mystics" (4.97).

10. Though Williams treats both the eleventh-century East-West schism and the late fourteenth-, early fifteenth-century schism between Rome and Avignon at length, he applies the term "Great Schism" to the later break within the Roman Catholic Church. Williams writes of this conflict that it is "inconceivable that the generation . . . which received the shock and the continuity of disunion should not have eased men's minds towards dispute and hostility. The split of the Reformation was already prepared" (154).

A Sub-Pagan Society?

The New English Weekly, 16 (14 Dec 1939) 125-26

Mr. Maurice Reckitt, in his kindly review of my book in the last issue, raises a point which is of considerable interest in itself.[1] That the point is raised does not surprise me; but I am a little surprised by the criticism coming from this quarter – coming from which I am compelled to give it the most careful consideration. Nevertheless, I do not write as one having the slightest ground of complaint, but in gratitude to a reviewer who has done what is rare: raised a point which is relevant but which greatly transcends in importance the book itself.

Mr. Reckitt expresses, by the title of his article, the suspicion that the society which I have outlined would not be Christian but sub-Christian. There are here two questions which should not be confused: the question of a criticism of my nomenclature, and the question whether the "Christian Society" of my book is too poor an ideal to be worth keeping before us. The first question cannot wholly be neglected, but it has little importance except in relation to the second. For the first question, I have consulted the O.E.D. for the definition of "pagan," and it seems to confirm my belief that my use of the word is at least as justifiable as Mr. Reckitt's. To him, a "pagan society" seems to mean one in which only material values, or material and interpersonal values on the human plane, are recognised; to me, a "pagan society" is one in which the wrong spiritual values are recognised.

The centre of the difference, however, is elsewhere; and I should like to assure myself first that Mr. Reckitt – in spite of, or perhaps because of, my laborious attempts to make clear the limitations which I imposed upon myself – has in no respect misunderstood me. He quotes me as defining a Christian society as one "in which the natural end of man – virtue and well-being in community – is acknowledged for all, and the supernatural end – beatitude – for those who have eyes to see it" [115]. Now in order to explain what I meant by this I had better go back to the source of the phrasing. It is a book by one Marcel Demongeot, called *Le meilleur régime politique selon Saint Thomas*:[2] I am indebted to the author directly and also to his quotations from the master.

> *De. Reg.*, I, 14: Videtur autem finis esse multitudinis congregatae vivere secundum virtutem. Ad hoc enim homines congregantur, ut simul bene vivant . . . bona autem vita est secundum virtutem; *virtuosa igitur vita est congregationis humanae finis*.[3]

The author says a little later:

> Aristote bornait en effet le bien commun à une vie intérieure purement terrestre, si élevée fût-elle; saint Thomas christianise, en la reprenant, la pensée d'Aristote; sans faire de la vie éternelle la fin propre et directe de la cité, il considère que la vie vertueuse qui en est la fin ne saurait avoir le caractère de fin dernière, mais doit s'orienter elle-même vers la béatitude parfaite; la cité doit au moins créer les conditions sociales qui permettront le mieux à ses membres de gagner le ciel. '*Non est ergo ultimus finis multitudinis congregatae vivere secundum virtutem, sed per virtuosam vitam pervenire ad fruitionem divinam*' (*De Reg.* I, 14).[4]

Mr. Reckitt will at this point be about to exclaim that I have added a little bit of my own to this conception of the City: so I hasten to admit it at once. What I have added is simply the admission, that my City must find a place for inhabitants who fail to recognise the Christian revelation. But if my society is to be a Christian Society, this part of the population must be a minority. Is it possible that in reading my sentence, Mr. Reckitt has taken *all* to correspond to "the Christian Community," and *those who have eyes to see it* to correspond to "the Community of Christians"? That is not what I meant: I intended that even the intellectually least developed should, with however bleared a vision, acknowledge the supernatural end of beatitude.

Mr. Reckitt tells us that he is "unable to see how the acceptance of a 'natural end' by those whom our author (as he shows elsewhere) clearly regards as the great majority of any foreseeable order, can create a Christian society" [115]. On this point, we are certainly in agreement, though Mr. Reckitt seems not to think so. For if Mr. Reckitt infers that I believe that the acceptance of a natural end by the great majority can create a Christian society, he obviously thinks that I have fallen into the grossest heresy. I do not believe that Christianity germinates out of natural religion, but that it is given by revelation; and it is only from the Christian point of view that the "natural ends" can be recognised as merely natural.

Even, however, if what seems to me a misunderstanding is put aside, there is still a difficulty. Concerning what I have called "the religious life of the people," Mr. Reckitt observes: "One is forced to the question what relation a 'religious life' of this quality bears to the religion of the New Testament. . . . [A] religion which expects no more than this, nothing more elevated, nothing more heroic, from the mass of its devotees can surely be little more than an official cult and a code of morals" [116]. I hope that when Mr. Reckitt says *expects*, he means *expects*, and not *asks*. A religion should certainly ask more than this, but if it expects more than this, it is likely to be deceived. And when we look at what the Christian Faith has meant and means, to the mass of the people – at least, in Catholic countries – I do not think that it is or has ever been merely "an official cult and a code of morals." As for the question what relation a religious life of this quality bears to the religion of the New Testament, it is no more than the question what relation Christendom has ever borne to the religion of the New Testament. And when I say "Christendom," I mean the people whom St. Paul reproached and admonished, as well as the populations of Europe in the Middle Ages or in our own times. Mr. Reckitt's objection appears to be, that I do not expect as much of my Christian Community as I do of my Community of Christians. There is a fundamental dilemma from which it is no more possible for Mr. Reckitt to escape than for me. If you design your Christian Society only according to what your experience of human beings, and the history of the last nineteen hundred years, tells you is possible, then it must remain open to the charge of being sub-Christian. If you design it beyond experience and history, you are committed to utopian plans the impracticality of which will expose you to relapse into a Lutheran despair of this world. I do not deny the possibility of a much more Christian society than that which I have outlined: for all things are possible to God. And I am aware that one cannot hold any view on these matters except in imminent peril of falling into one heresy or another: if I risk destruction in Pelagianism, Mr. Reckitt the theologian runs the danger of abandoning the world to Mr. Reckitt the social worker.[5] Mr. Reckitt seems to suppose that he has condemned my Christian Society by suggesting that it "will be likely to repeat those errors of the old which have led to so much evil and contributed to the apostasy of Europe by the nourishing of superstition within the ecclesiastical integument, and by a readiness to treat religion as instrumental to social ends" [116]. But of course! It will be likely to repeat every error of the past: I did not attempt

to sketch anything but a human society – that is to say, a society which, whatever spiritual heights it reaches, is liable always and at any moment to fall out of the hand of God.[6]

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. Reckitt's review of TSE's *The Idea of a Christian Society*, titled "A Sub-Christian Society?," appeared in the issue of 7 Dec 1939, 115-16.

2. Paris: André Blot, 1928. Marcel Demongeot (1869-1917), student of Aquinas and military commander killed in the war, also authored *Citoyen et soldat, études sur l'armée nationale* (1902).

3. *Trans*: However, it seems that the end of an assembled multitude is to live according to virtue. For men form a group in order to live well together . . . and a good life is one lived according to virtue: *therefore, virtuous life is the end of human society* (89).

4. *Trans*: Aristotle in fact confined the common good to a purely earthly inner life, so high was its condition; Saint Thomas takes Aristotle's thought and Christianizes it; without making eternal life the be-all and end-all of the city, he believes that a virtuous life, which is its end, could not possess the character of the ultimate end, but must itself lean toward perfect beatitude; the city must at least create the social conditions which will best allow its members to gain Heaven. '*Therefore, the ultimate end of an assembled multitude is not to live according to virtue, but through a virtuous life to come to the enjoyment of God*' (*De Reg*. 1, 14) (91).

5. In *The Idea of a Christian Society*, TSE cites Christopher Dawson's *Beyond Politics*, in which the Pelagian heresy is invoked to describe a conception of religion that serves "as a kind of social tonic that can be used in times of national emergency in order to extract a further degree of moral effort from the people" (5.729). The heresy attributed to Pelagius – not always fairly or correctly – downplays the doctrine of original sin and the necessity of divine intervention, emphasizing instead free will and the goodness of human nature.

6. This may be an allusion to the opening line of "Animula" (1929): "'Issues from the hand of God, the simple soul'" (*CPP* 107; *Poems1* 105), which is itself a reference to *Purgatorio* XVI.85 (*DC2* 196), marked in TSE's copy.

PART II
Signed Letters and Documents with Multiple Authorship

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The Money System

To the Editor of *The Times*

The Times (5 Apr 1934) 6

Sir, – In view of the publication of the letter of Sir Geoffrey Clarke and others in your issue of to-day, we beg to submit without further delay the following statement which we have had in preparation independently.[1]

In consideration of the continued difficulty experienced by all countries, whatever their political system, in adjusting consumption to production, the undersigned believe that it would be of value to have a thorough and public examination of some scheme of national credit.[2] It would appear that the possibilities of production throughout the world have enormously increased, so as to give every individual a certainty of adequate provision for the necessities of life. There appears to be lacking some machinery of distribution, by means of which the enormous values inherent in the national capacity to produce could be made available to every man and woman. One such scheme has been before the public for some years, and is attracting increasing attention; and, though it has been severely criticized, the scheme shows a surprising vitality. The criticisms, when they are free from prejudice, do not seem to amount to more than academic objections. What we feel to be essential is a thorough and impartial survey of any proposal which offers a solution of the most urgent problems of the day, without committing the nation to a political programme involving other issues on which there can be no general agreement.[3]

Yours faithfully,

LASCELLES ABERCROMBIE.
BONAMY DOBRÉE.
T. S. ELIOT.
ALDOUS HUXLEY.
HEWLETT JOHNSON.
EDWIN MUIR.
HAMISH MILES.
HERBERT READ.
I. A. RICHARDS.

April 4.

NOTES

1. In their letter in the *Times* of 4 Apr, under the headings "Poverty in Plenty / Faults of Monetary System / Call for Parliamentary Enquiry," Sir Geoffrey Clarke (d. 1950) and nine other signatories stated that "the present monetary system, the proper function of which is to facilitate the production of goods and their distribution to consumers as required, has broken down, both in its national and international aspects. . . . We appeal, through your columns, for an immediate investigation by Parliament of the fundamental principles which should govern our monetary system with a view to its reform in the interests of both producers and consumers" (8).

2. See TSE's previous discussions of Major Douglas and Social Credit in "In Sincerity and Earnestness" (5.109) and in a letter to the editor of *Social Credit* (5.131).

3. TSE and Bonamy Dobrée were the primary authors and organizers of the letter. On 17 Mar, TSE sent "the letter as revised yesterday afternoon" to David Cecil, inviting him to become a signatory: "I hope you won't feel that this commits you too much! I am myself a horse of no colour, being neither fascist nor communist (disliking both) and not being a Douglasite because I don't understand it, and considering that 'Conservative' does not mean enough at the present time and is almost synonymous with whiggery anyway; and to me the point of this letter is that it should be signed by people in a position like mine." When Cecil declined, he wrote to Dobrée on 23 Mar: "I am glad that Richards has come through. Huxley's acceptance must be in your hand by now, so I think that will do nicely. . . . I don't think Cecil cuts any ice, except possibly with the public which has never heard of any of the rest of us: I only asked him because I happened to be seeing him at the moment; and my retrospective impression now is that he is not an individual at all, only a member of a family." Later that day he wrote to Pound in their Uncle Remus dialect that "a letter as been prepared this is a secret signed by self, Read, Dobrée, Richards, Huxley, Muir and others a few includin O Lord Abercrombie Lassells advocating consideration of Credit Reform does that sprise you or Not but in any case I misdoubt *The Times* won't print it." The letter in the *Times* was reprinted in the *NEW* of 12 Apr (606).

The Monetary System

To the Editor of *The Times*

The Times (10 May 1934) 10

In view of the great number of inquiries we have received consequent upon the letter from ourselves which you were good enough to print in your columns on April 5,[1] and the impossibility of dealing with them individually, may we further trespass on the hospitality of your pages to say that the scheme we had in mind as notably requiring thorough discussion is that concerned with Social Credit and associated in particular with the name of Major C. H. Douglas?

LASCELLES ABERCROMBIE, BONAMY DOBRÉE, T. S. ELIOT,
ALDOUS HUXLEY, HEWLETT JOHNSON, HAMISH MILES,
EDWIN MUIR, HERBERT READ, I. A. RICHARDS.

NOTE

1. 5.759. The present letter was the ninth of twelve published under the general title "Points from Letters," each without the conventional address to the editor, "Sir, -."

Authors and the Law of Libel: Plea for Reform

To the Editor of *The Times*

The Times (13 Mar 1936) 10

Sir, – In view of the increasing numbers of actions brought against authors and publishers we submit that the time has come for drastic reforms in the law relating to literary libel.[1] Under existing conditions many of the great classics of the past could not have been published without grave risk of suppression, since it is mainly authors of repute, who are endeavouring to give credible pictures of contemporary life, whose work is in jeopardy. A serious threat to the quality of English literature obviously exists when the freedom of expression of reputable authors is limited by a fear of flimsy or malicious charges against which they are virtually unprotected.

At present the law is so heavily weighted against authors that it is substantially true to say that they can make no effective defence to charges as claims made against them in respect of their published works. By no means the only difficulty, although a very common one, arises where the plaintiff alleges that the description in a book of some purely fictional character constitutes a libel on himself. To make out a case, he has only to procure a witness or two to swear that they "recognize" the character in question as himself. The witnesses may be ignorant, misinformed, malicious, or even parties to thinly disguised blackmail, but their evidence will suffice to throw upon the author and publisher the whole cost of proving that the character cannot reasonably be identified with the plaintiff. We are of the opinion that no action should lie without proof that the defendant intended to refer to the plaintiff, and that damages other than nominal damages should not be awarded except to the extent that actual damage is proved to have been sustained. As the law stands the way is open to people who fancy or pretend that they recognize touches of themselves in a character to make easy money, since, even if the author has never heard of or seen the plaintiff, he can still be mulcted in heavy costs and damages.

Further, we would suggest that the legal machinery in its relation to all actions for libel should be greatly simplified. In particular, we suggest that

the verdict be taken out of the hands of juries. Juries are too easily influenced in certain directions, and it is difficult to bring home to them the importance of protecting the freedom of literature in general and in particular the right to express unpopular views. Moreover, they have little opportunity of reading the book and forming a considered opinion.

We are of opinion, further, that something should be done to discourage the bringing of obviously flimsy or conspiratorial cases. Under present conditions the bringing of a case to trial means that both author and publisher stand to lose heavily whether they win or lose the actual case, and for this reason publishers tend to settle out of Court, even at the last minute and after months of costly legal inquiry and preparation. In most instances the author (under contract) is not only liable for 50 per cent. of the expense incurred, but has to suffer the annoyance and harmful publicity to his reputation by reason of Press reports, which almost invariably convey the impression that the defendants have settled because they had no case, rather than because they sought to avoid the ruinous expense of litigation. Moreover, all such reported settlements are a direct incentive to unscrupulous persons alike among laymen and among members of the legal profession.

We suggest as a remedy that the Courts should be empowered at their discretion in any case where the action fails to award in a summary way, in addition to the costs, a sum of damages to the defendant wherever the circumstances are similar to those in which an action for damages for malicious prosecution will lie, *i.e.*, when the case has been brought for some indirect or improper motive and without reasonable or probable cause. Such a power would, no doubt, not often be exercised, but its mere existence would have a salutary effect.

We are, &c.,

RICHARD ALDINGTON; MICHAEL ARLEN; MAURICE BARING; PHYLLIS BENTLEY; EDMUND BLUNDEN; VERA BRITTAIN; JOHN DRINKWATER; T. S. ELIOT; DAVID GARNETT; PHILIP GIBBS; PHILIP GUEDALLA; A. P. HERBERT; ALDOUS HUXLEY; STORM JAMESON; SHEILA KAYE-SMITH; E. V. KNOX; ROSE MACAULAY; JOHN MASEFIELD; A. A. MILNE; NAOMI MITCHISON; CHARLES MORGAN; HENRY W. NEVINSON; R. ELLIS ROBERTS; V. SACKVILLE-WEST; BEATRICE KEAN SEYMOUR; WILLIAM KEAN SEYMOUR; EVELYN SHARP; HELEN SIMPSON;

RALPH STRAUS; FRANK SWINNERTON; H. M. TOMLINSON;
H. G. WELLS; REBECCA WEST; VIRGINIA WOOLF.

London, March 12.

NOTE

1. TSE addresses arbitrary litigation leveled against authors and publishers in "Should There Be a Censorship of Books?" (5.263).

A Chelsea Square Trolley-Bus Proposal

To the Editor of *The Times*

The Times (31 July 1937) 8

Sir, – Paultons Square is a quiet residential neighbourhood in Chelsea, lying between the King's Road and Chelsea Embankment. It possesses considerable architectural charm, having been symmetrically designed early in the nineteenth century, and its gardens contain some exceptionally fine trees. Hitherto its freedom from through traffic has made it safe both for the children of the residents and for more than 300 other children who use it four times a day as a thoroughfare to and from schools near by. The peaceful atmosphere of the square is prized equally by those who live in it and by those who recognize that, as London becomes noisier and more crowded, it is increasingly desirable for London as a whole that the amenities of such places should be preserved.

We have learned with consternation of a proposal to allow Paultons Square to be used as turning-route for trolley-buses. To admit trolley-buses to the square would, in our opinion, be to ruin it. The erection of standards and overhead wires would be destructive of its character and charm. Danger to the children who use the square would be considerable, as its roads are narrow and were never intended for through traffic; and expert opinion has been given that the vibration caused by heavy traffic could not fail to cause serious structural damage to the fabric of the houses. In the belief that the preservation of such squares as Paultons Square is on every ground in the interest of London and of Londoners, we desire to add our protest to the protests which residents in the neighbourhood have made against the proposal.[1]

We are, Sir, yours, &c.,

MAX BEERBOHM, CLIVE BELL, E. F. BENSON, DAVID CECIL, KENNETH CLARK, W. G. CONSTABLE, CREWE, CAMPBELL DODGSON, T. S. ELIOT, ARUNDELL ESDAILE, PETER FLEMING, JOHN GRETTON, WILSON HARRIS, GEORGE HILL, A. M. HIND, C. E. M. JOAD, ROSE MACAULAY, EDWARD MAUFE, CHARLES MORGAN, H. V. MORTON, ROBERT NICHOLS, CHARLES PEERS, EILEEN POWER, HERBERT READ, A. E. RICHARDSON, WILLIAM

ROTHENSTEIN, WALTER RUSSELL, OSBERT SITWELL,
J. C. SQUIRE, P. WILSON STEER, HENRY G. STRAUSS,
G. M. TREVELYAN, HUGH WALPOLE, CLOUGH WILLIAM-ELLIS,
VIRGINIA WOOLF, EVELYN WRENCH, F. YEATS-BROWN,
G. M. YOUNG.

NOTE

1. The request for TSE's supporting signature came from Derek Verschoyle, editor of the *Spectator*, to which TSE had contributed on several occasions. "The square in which I live is threatened with an invasion of trolley-buses," Verschoyle wrote on 25 June, including a draft of his letter to the *Times* and hoping to obtain "about twenty signatures of people whose opinions on such a subject would carry weight. If you approve of the cause, I should be immensely grateful if you felt inclined to allow your name to be added. I do not think that you would disapprove of the company in which you would find yourself." TSE replied on 28 June that he would sign the enclosure "with pleasure. I like to keep drafts of letters, so that I can know at any moment what I have signed, and I do not think that you need the letter back in order to make use of my signature."

The Dean of Rochester

To the Editor of *The Times*

The Times (14 Sept 1937) 8

Sir, – There must be many people who appreciate the great work which Dr. Francis Underhill, the Dean of Rochester, has done for the Church of England, and many who remember his ministry in Birmingham, Oxford, and in London.[1]

We therefore feel that we should not like this opportunity of his forthcoming consecration as Bishop of Bath and Wells to pass by unmarked.

It is proposed that our recognition of this event should take the form of a pastoral staff which can be used when he travels about his diocese.

Those who would like to contribute are asked to send a donation to the National Bank Limited, 13, Old Broad Street, London, E.C.2, marked "Dr. Francis Underhill Presentation Fund," or to the hon. treasurer, Major Guy Kindersley, O.B.E., 1 and 2, Great Winchester Street, London, E.C.2.

Your obedient servants,

SELBORNE, HALIFAX, HUGH CECIL, ARTHUR CHANDLER,
T. S. ELIOT, B. J. KIDD, A. H. MACDONALD, W. SPENS,
GUY M. KINDERSLEY (HON. TREASURER).

NOTE

1. In Mar 1937, TSE was a weekend guest of Francis Underhill (1878-1943), dean of Rochester, who commissioned him to write his lecture "Religious Drama: Mediaeval and Modern," which he delivered to the Friends of Rochester Cathedral on 4 June (5.519). Underhill served as Bishop of Bath and Wells from 1937 until his death.

Mr. Wyndham Lewis's Works

To the Editor of *The Times*

The Times (22 Dec 1937) 8

Sir, – Many years have passed since the strange mind of Wyndham Lewis began to invigorate English painting and letters.

Mr. Lewis is now holding his first exhibition since 1921, and it seems to us an appropriate time to suggest that Lewis's deep and original art should be publicly recognized.[1] Social change has made it inevitable that in these days the place and duties of the private patron should be handed over, in a large degree, to the public galleries; and those rarer artists whose vision and energy are too great to be confined in small or decorative pieces must depend on the wise discernment of the galleries more and more.

We believe Wyndham Lewis to be such an artist, and we are convinced that every serious painter and serious writer in England is much in debt to his integrity, and to the originality and strength of his vision; and we hope that the opportunity of acquiring a representative work by him for the national collection will not be overlooked.

Yours, &c.,

HENRY MOORE, ERIC GILL, PAUL NASH, MARK GERTLER, EDMUND DULAC, EDWARD WADSWORTH, P. H. JOWETT, RANDOLPH SCHWABE, JOHN PIPER, SERGE CHERMAYEFF, RAYMOND MCGRATH, ARTHUR BLISS, MICHAEL E. SADLER, T. S. ELIOT, W. H. AUDEN, HERBERT READ, RHONDDA, REBECCA WEST, NAOMI MITCHISON, STEPHEN SPENDER, GEOFFREY GRIGSON.

NOTE

1. Following a private viewing for friends and supporters on 2 Dec, Lewis's exhibition of fifty-four paintings, titled "INFERNOS and other paintings," opened at the Leicester Galleries on 4 Dec. His memoirs, *Blasting and Bombardiering*, had appeared at the end of Oct.

A Liberal Manifesto: The Place of Reason in the Thought of the Church

The Church Times (20 Jan 1939) 58

There are many people in England who, though they rarely attend the services of the Church, have a real sense of the need for religion. We believe that a large number have given up the practice of going to church either because they have been offered a form of worship which does not satisfy their needs, or because the Christian religion has been inadequately presented to them. We believe that a Catholic interpretation of the position of the Church of England has the decisive advantage of recognizing that in the divisions which have rent Christendom truth does not lie exclusively on any one side. But we believe that if Anglo-Catholicism is to play the part which it might, certain present tendencies must be counteracted in regard alike to worship and teaching.

THE PRAYER BOOK.

A Catholic interpretation of the Church of England has been maintained from the sixteenth century onwards by many of the most learned Anglican theologians; it has shown its power to co-operate with other schools of thought both at home and abroad, and has exercised a profound influence on English religion, culture and life. But it must be put forward both in teaching and practice in a form which meets the needs of the present time. In regard to worship, we recognize that reforms and improvements of the Prayer Book are urgently needed, and we believe that a settlement of the controversies of the past is both possible and desirable. But in present conditions the Church in England is largely a missionary Church. It must adopt missionary methods, and it must seek to build upon such religious traditions as are available. In consequence, it is a matter of great importance that, so far as is in any way possible, changes in forms of worship should be based upon and grow out of the forms of worship contained in the Book of Common Prayer, which is familiar to the English people as a whole, and rightly valued by them, rather than involve the introduction of forms which are alien to our religious history. We desire to see in Anglo-Catholic churches forms of service which are recognizably Prayer Book services.

In regard to the teaching of the Church, we believe in the Catholic Faith that we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity, and in the Incarnation of the Word in the historical Person of the Lord Jesus Christ, and we believe in the historical truth of His Virgin Birth and His bodily Resurrection from the dead. We believe that in the sacramental life of the Church Catholic the faithful possess the means of grace appointed by God to give man access to Himself. We believe in the doctrines of the Eucharistic Sacrifice and Presence. We believe that it is our duty to pray for the dead as well as for the living, and that we ourselves are aided by the prayers of Blessed Mary and all the Saints.

NO INFALLIBILITY.

At the same time, we reject the belief that the teaching of the undivided Church should be regarded as settling all questions for all time without respect to the advance of thought and knowledge. We believe that the Reformation, even in the Church of England, obscured certain doctrines and practices of very real value, such as the belief in the Communion of Saints and the practice of sacramental confession; but we reject the view, often put forward by some Anglo-Catholics, which denies that a drastic reform of religion was needed in the sixteenth century, and we believe that in spite of losses involved the Reformation produced some very real gains. Consequently, we deplore the tendency to assume that Anglo-Catholics must hold that any divergence from the general outlook of the Roman Catholic theology, or from Thomist philosophy, is necessarily erroneous. In particular, we cannot accept the belief that specific theological statements can be assumed to be infallible simply because they have been laid down by Popes or General Councils, or because they have hitherto been generally accepted by the Church as a whole. We believe that the Holy Spirit is always guiding the Church into all truth, and therefore that there has been development of doctrine. But such development is consistent with the possibility that a pronouncement made in the past, which expressed the truth of God at the time in so far as man's knowledge then enabled him to understand it, may need to be modified or corrected in the light of fuller knowledge. The same is true of various pronouncements of ecclesiastical authority. In these circumstances, we find it hard to resist the conclusion that "infallibility" is discredited, and that Catholic authority needs to be distinguished from "infallibility" if it is to play its full and necessary part in the life and teaching of the Church.

STRICT HISTORICAL CRITICISM.

Our belief that the Church is continually being guided into all truth, and that this guidance of the Holy Spirit may lead to the modification and correction of particular beliefs, enables us to face the possibility of such changes without the danger of that loss to religion which has resulted in the past from a refusal to accept changes except under compulsion. The attempt of orthodox Christianity to defend the verbal inerrancy of the Scriptures until forced to abandon it was a serious factor in bringing about unbelief, and we desire to see established a conception of doctrinal authority which will preserve the Church from similar mistakes in the future by recognizing that reason no less than Scripture and tradition has a vital part to play in the authority of the Church.

Thus we believe that the Virgin Birth and the bodily Resurrection of our Lord are necessarily involved in the doctrine of the Incarnation. But here, as elsewhere in so far as the Christian faith is bound up with particular historical events, the recognition of the place of reason in the thought and teaching of the Church makes it necessary to strengthen the authoritative proclamation of the Gospel by a strict historical criticism. The New Testament itself appeals to those "which from the beginning were eye-witnesses and ministers of the word" in the interests of historical truth: it is the product not only of tradition, but of the criticism of tradition. We do not doubt that the application of modern critical methods to the New Testament has confirmed the truth of the story of the Gospel as a whole, against fanciful attempts to reduce it to a mass of legends, invented to exalt a simple teacher of Jewish piety into a divine figure copied from the mystery-religions of the first century. But we insist that the truth of the Gospel must be established not by appeals to the formularies of the "undivided Church," but by free discussion which accepts the principles of scientific criticism.

FREE DISCUSSION.

As a result of these considerations, we hold that freedom to discuss the historical truth of the narratives of the Gospel, carrying with it the right to express doubt as to that historical truth, must be allowed if the truth of such narratives is to be established by the free consensus of Christian opinion. We would, of course, insist not only that in expressing such doubts, due regard must be paid to the duty of charity and courtesy in avoiding the giving of offence to conscience, but also that the clergy are bound constantly to make clear what is, in fact, the accepted teaching of the Church.

In regard to marriage, we recognize that the teaching of the Church of England with increasing clarity condemns divorce *a vinculo*;[1] and that, holding this view, the Church of England should refuse to permit the re-marriage of divorced persons in church, and is entitled to place under discipline divorced persons who re-marry. On the other hand, it has to be recognized that the Eastern Orthodox Churches, and at least one Church in our own Communion, permit, in certain cases, the re-marriage of divorced persons. Unless we are prepared in practice to define Catholic consent by reference solely to the Roman Church, it cannot be said that the interpretation of our Lord's teaching, as precluding absolutely divorce *a vinculo*, is as yet attested by Catholic consent. However sure a particular Church may feel that some course of action is wrong, we cannot believe that life-long exclusion from Communion is warranted *ipso facto* in the case of actions, which those concerned would be free to pursue if they were members of a Church with which we are in full communion or of the Eastern Orthodox Churches. We are also of opinion that the Church's teaching on the primary duty of parenthood for married persons does not gain in cogency by an indiscriminate condemnation of the recognition, by the Lambeth Conference of 1930, that conditions may exist which provide, in certain cases, a moral justification for the avoidance of pregnancy.

Again, in regard to certain actual and possible breaches of Catholic order, we cannot hold that, in a period when there is a widespread movement towards a recognition of the underlying unity of all Christians and towards a corporate reunion of Christendom, it is right or possible to apply rules which were framed in entirely different conditions, and which ignore the extent to which the Church has been in the past responsible for the divisions which exist at the present time. We believe that surrenders of principle can be avoided only by a recognition of exceptional conditions, especially in the missionfield, and by a willingness to make ungrudgingly all legitimate concessions, though we must not be taken as approving all current proposals. We could not approve, for example, any proposals inconsistent with the maintenance of the historic episcopate.

Since we believe that it is urgently necessary at the present time to give due expression to the Liberal Catholic tradition within the Church of England, we propose to constitute not another Church Society in opposition to those already existing, but a group; and we ask all those who are in general agreement with the statement to send their names to the Very Rev.

the Dean of Winchester, The Deanery, Winchester, or to the Rev. F. E. P. S. Langton, 24, Exmouth Market, London, E.C.1.[2]

W. S. BAKER (VICAR OF ST. JOHN'S, NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE), H. N. BATE (DEAN OF YORK), F. H. BRABANT (CANON OF WINCHESTER), S. C. CARPENTER (DEAN OF EXETER), T. S. ELIOT, A. B. EMDEN, C. P. HANKEY (CHAPLAIN, ST. JOHN'S, MENTON), LEONARD HODGSON (CANON OF CHRIST CHURCH AND REGIUS PROFESSOR OF MORAL AND PASTORAL THEOLOGY), C. CLEMENT H. JAMES (VICAR OF ST. GILES', CAMBRIDGE), WILFRED KNOX, O.G.S. (HON. CANON OF ELY), T. KNOX-SHAW, F. E. P. S. LANGTON (VICAR OF THE HOLY REDEEMER, CLERKENWELL), J. H. B. MACE (RECTOR OF HOLY TRINITY, WINCHESTER), E. J. MARRIOT (CANON OF WESTMINSTER), ROBERT MORTIMER (STUDENT OF CHRIST CHURCH AND LECTURER IN THEOLOGY), PHILLIP H. ROGERS (VICAR OF ST. STEPHEN'S, BOURNEMOUTH), E. G. SELWYN (DEAN OF WINCHESTER), ROSCOW SHEDDEN, BISHOP (VICAR OF WANTAGE), WILL SPENS, AND H. E. WYNN, O.G.S.

NOTES

1. A divorce *a vinculo matrimonii* (from the bonds of marriage) is a legal term denoting a complete divorce resulting from the illegal grounds of the marriage, as in bigamy or the marriage of near relations. In such a divorce, the partners would be free to remarry. It is distinct from a divorce *a mensa et thoro* (from bed and board), which results from the spouses' incompatibility. In such a divorce, the parties are separated, but the marriage remains intact.

2. TSE responded to criticism of this document by the editor of *The Church Times* in the issue of 27 Jan (5.666). *The Times* of 20 Jan chose not to print the document but to issue a summary critical response under the title "'Liberal Catholic Tradition' / New Group in the Church" (14):

> A statement of Liberal Catholic views signed by 20 clergy and laymen has been issued. The signatories say that, since they believe that "it is urgently necessary at the present time to give due expression to the Liberal Catholic tradition within the Church of England," they propose to constitute, not another Church society in opposition to those already existing, but a group.
>
> The signatories "recognize that reforms and improvements of the Prayer-book are urgently needed," but so far as possible such changes should not involve the introduction of "forms alien to our religious history. We desire to see in Anglo-Catholic churches forms of service which are recognizably Prayer-book services."
>
> With regard to doctrine, the signatories accept the historical truth of the Virgin Birth and the bodily Resurrection of Jesus Christ; they believe in the doctrines of the Eucharistic

> Sacrifice and Presence; and in the duty of prayer for the dead. But they reject the belief that the teaching of the undivided Church should be regarded as settling all questions for all time without respect to the advance of thought and knowledge. They believe that, "in spite of the losses involved, the Reformation produced some very real gains." They deplore "the tendency to assume that Anglo-Catholics must necessarily hold that any divergence from the general outlook of Roman Catholic theology or from Thomist philosophy must necessarily be erroneous." They believe that the Holy Spirit is always guiding the Church into all truth and therefore that there has been development of doctrine; and they say: "We find it hard to resist the conclusion that 'infallibility' is discredited." . . . Sympathisers with the group are invited to communicate with the Dean of Winchester.

The names of all 20 signatories were listed here as well, together with the ecclesiastical positions of the clergy, as above.

Evacuation – A Social Landmark[1]

The Christian News-Letter, No. 3 (15 Nov 1939) Supplement [5-8]

Evacuation is a challenge to our society. It is a challenge to our inveterate social complacency. Even those who were not unaware of slum conditions have recoiled at the full realisation that there are thousands of families which live like sub-human cave dwellers (and are forced so to live) in the midst of our great cities; even those who are not good at arithmetic are worried how it is that a child costs 8s. 6d. a week in the country, and 3s. in the town when its father is unemployed. It is a challenge to our capacity to put forth new social tissue: for evacuation has been as a great jagged wound tearing through family life and our national system of education. It has been a challenge to our capacity for social discipline: for it was obviously desirable that all the children should be evacuated from the dangerous areas, yet it was necessary that compulsion should not be applied.

But we must realise that the real impact of evacuation has been upon the poorer classes – the victims of industrialism. It is the proletarian who has had to take the first strain of totalitarian warfare. One cannot help wondering how any other class would have reacted to an equivalent strain. People are strangely unimaginative; and the majority of the good people of these islands are persuaded that the strain of war is falling on all alike. It is not so. And perhaps the first duty of the Christian mind, approaching the illimitable question of evacuation, is to grasp that simple fact.

TWO LEVELS OF APPROACH

Yet another caveat is necessary. Evacuation is emphaticaly a problem to which a Christian approach has to be made on at least two different levels: first, the Christian citizen must seek to influence Government action, which is in the main decisive, and thus change the general situation; and, second, he has to accept the situation as it exists, and to do his utmost to turn it to good. But it is, we think, a mistake in proportion to argue that evacuation is primarily a great social "opportunity." That may be the best way for many individuals to regard it. It *is* a unique opportunity for those in the receiving areas to do their Christian duty in making the children feel really at home; and for the children to be initiated into a more natural mode of life. But it

is not a welcome opportunity for those who have the duty of caring for the children – at least half the evacuables – who run wild in the cities. Evacuation (it must be insisted) is essentially an emergency measure, with the potentiality of more evil than good. To make the good outweigh the evil is a difficult task which cannot be accomplished on the level of personal relations alone. The Christian mind must clearly conceive its duty on the impersonal level – by doing its utmost to influence for good the large-scale decisions of the Government.

Finally, the situation is fluid. Since this paper was originally written the Government has announced its intention of reopening as many schools as possible in the evacuated areas.[2] But attendance is not to be compulsory. This may be the only practical way to meet the present intolerable situation; but it is essentially a makeshift.

WAS EVACUATION NECESSARY?

Evacuation is more than two months old, but the air-raids have not yet really begun. The pressure of fear has slackened, and the impact of a war-measure has been upon a peace-psychology. On both sides, evacuees and receivers, there has been the opportunity to resent inconveniences and hardships which a condition of intense aerial warfare would have obliterated from consciousness. When bare life is all one hopes to save for one's children or oneself, one ceases to be sensitive to the maladjustments that have been the occasion of much suffering and much criticism. The authorities are hardly to be blamed for not having foreseen that there would be a period of war without war, or for having regarded their problem as the limited one of getting the children out of the urban centres as expeditiously as possible.

Are they to be blamed for not having taken steps to avoid the two great evils now manifest: the catastrophic interruption of the education of the town-children and the break-up of family life[?] The former was inevitable unless evacuation of school-age children was compulsory; the latter was inevitable unless provision could have been made to protect the children by building effective shelters in the towns. If this was really possible, obviously the whole problem of evacuation would have been avoided. Whether it was possible or not, no serious and sustained attempt was made to enforce this view upon the Government. For the past year evacuation of the children has been generally anticipated. If it was not to be compulsory, a complete dislocation of the educational system was inevitable. The conclusion

is that, if we say that the Government should have taken steps to prevent the two great evils, we should say it with a full realisation that the measures necessary to prevent them would have been rejected by Parliament and the country.

THE SCATTERING OF THE SCHOOL UNITS

Criticism of the past action of the authorities, if fair, thus becomes technical, not fundamental. Only one seems truly pertinent: that the urban schools were not treated as units by the dispersal and billeting officers. The original plan was that the head teachers of the schools should have their pupils in as compact an area as possible, for the purpose of supervision and education. No clear orders to this effect were given to the receiving areas, with the result that in many more cases than was necessary the school unit is disastrously scattered. This can and must be remedied by a systematic rearrangement of billets. The teachers cannot be replaced as the responsible guardians of the children; they need the assistance and advice of the local clergy and local committees, they need also the services of additional medical officers, seconded from the evacuating areas; but they are the chief officers of this great migration, and they must be esteemed as such.

MOTHERS AND CHILDREN

The evacuees fall into two distinct groups: mothers with children, and children without their mothers. It is generally acknowledged that the billeting of the unaccompanied children has been, in the main, successful – so far. Children quickly accommodate themselves to being without their parents; and they are amenable to any sensible domestic authority. The general testimony is that where cottagers have received children alone, the billeting has worked well; a practical harmony has been quickly established. But even here the situation is fluid: it is reported that since the imposition of the charge of 6s. a week on the parents the children are being brought home again.

With the mothers, and with the children accompanied and influenced by the mothers, it has been a different story. To the woman from a crowded area, country life is unspeakably monotonous. Again, the town mother has not *had* to develop the all-round domestic capacity of the villager; she tends to be a passenger in the cottage. Even when the townswoman is fairly well domesticated, the opportunity of friction offered by a common use of a stove, sink, and utensils are plentiful. Almost without exception, the

situation has been found to be impossible. Sometimes a solution has been attempted by furnishing empty cottages and putting the town-mothers together into them. But this is seldom possible. And the main solution of the problem of the evacuated town-mother has been her return to the town, taking her children with her. But this drift back to the cities is only an intensification of the problem. If the air-bombardment comes, many of the returned women will clamour to be evacuated again. Is another organised effort to be made to evacuate them? The decision, either way, should be taken now; and if they are to be evacuated, arrangements should be made immediately to accommodate them in empty houses and camp hostels.[3] Billeting them on cottagers is a proved failure; already in some rural districts it has created a wave of anti-semitic feeling, even though the actual proportion of Jews may be relatively small.

THE NECESSITY OF A THREE YEAR PLAN

But above all, it is necessary that a long-term plan should now be clearly formulated. If the Government's plans are being made on the assumption that the war will last three years, then the plans must include a plan for a three years' settlement of the children from the danger-zones in the countryside. This is a prodigious undertaking. It is equally foolish to minimise its difficulties, and to postpone contriving to meet them. But so soon as the perspective is shifted from a sudden and temporary evacuation of children from crowded cities to their settlement for three years in the country, it is evident that a radical reconsideration is required.

The one tremendous issue with which we are then faced is whether evacuation of school-age children shall be made compulsory. Unless it is, it seems that there can be no real remedy for the interruption of education short of the total abandonment of evacuation. Compulsory education and voluntary evacuation simply make nonsense together. A decision must be taken, or there will be educational and social chaos. Therefore, a choice has to be made between separating children from their parents or wives from their husbands. It is a choice between real evils; but if it has to be made, then it is definitely preferable that children should be separated from their parents than wives from their husbands. The total damage to the family is less, and the possibility of compensating advantage to the children greater. But a responsible decision is required, not a mere burking of it, because it is feared that the decision may have serious consequences, and may – in either case – create widespread discontent.

THE REVELATION OF THE SLUMS

Public opinion has been shocked by the revelation of the condition and habits of the slum-dwellers; and, as usual, there has been an outcry against the "authorities," on the assumption that efficient disinfection would have removed the evil.[4] The consequences of slum-living can be abolished only by abolishing slums: and the problems of slum-clearance, which are not merely economic, but also human, are too vast to be hinted at here. It is reported that the revelations have kindled many slumbering sparks of social conscience to flame. Let us hope the flame will continue to burn. It certainly will not unless it is fanned incessantly. For the horrible truth about slum areas is easily evaded by the British conscience, which finds it more congenial to blame the slum-dwellers for their fecklessness than to acknowledge responsibility for the conditions in which they are forced to live. The unconscious resistance to admitting that it takes heroines to maintain the uphill fight for cleanliness and morality in a slum-dwelling is truly tremendous. All Christian men must seize this opportunity of breaking down the resistance and preventing the evasion.

THE DISRUPTION OF FAMILY LIFE

But evacuation has revealed, not created, the evil of slums. The essential problems of evacuation stand apart. First comes the great question of principle: Shall evacuation of school-children be made compulsory? Or, shall compulsory education be abandoned? Or, shall a positive effort be made to apply different principles to different danger-zones? Second, assuming that evacuation is not abandoned (even though it remains voluntary): How are we to compensate for the disruption of family life, and for the interruption of education? Palliatives, not remedies, are possible; and the possible degree of palliation is much greater in the latter than in the former case. Continuity of adequate education can be largely restored if there is the will to restore it. The disruption of family life is in a different category. Here the one true remedy is *caritas* or loving care. There is plenty of it being exercised. We know a gardener and his wife, with a little boy of their own, who have taken in two little girls from Hoxton. Their father is a boot-repairer; he and his wife came on a special Sunday 'bus excursion (10s. the two). "They wanted to pay for their dinner and tea!" said the gardener indignantly. "But they were such nice people. The mother cried when she thanked us for the way we had looked after her little ones. She said they had *never* looked so well. I nearly cried myself." That case is probably much more typical than

we suspect. Our strong impression is that the working-class in the country has displayed far more *caritas* than others. To organise *caritas* is not easy; but it is not impossible. It is the duty of Christians.

EQUALITY OF SACRIFICE

It is imperative, in order not to lose our sense of values, that we should remember that the only humane (let alone Christian) method is that families should be evacuated as wholes. That is admittedly impossible; it demands an evacuation of industry itself which would take years to achieve in peace-time, and is unthinkable in time of war. But if working-class families are to be treated as so much state material, social justice requires that the more privileged classes should be treated in the same way. It is iniquitous to take the position that evacuation is a benefit conferred on the working-class who of their own free-will chose danger-zones to live in. They live there by a compulsion which existing society has imposed on them; and evacuation is a grim necessity under which they are bound to suffer. Totalitarianism for the working-class alone is an insufferable idea. The idea of equality of real, experienced sacrifice – not something that can be measured in money – has to be driven home.

THE RESTORATION OF EDUCATION

The restoration of adequate education depends, in the first place, on gathering together the members of the scattered school unit; then on the provision of adequate accommodation. The release of all possible buildings is urgently necessary. The two-shift system is a mere stop-gap; under it both town- and village-children go short. The difficulties will increase as the winter draws on. It is highly desirable, for more reasons than the obvious one, that churches should be used wherever possible for the instruction and entertainment of children. But the burden of the increased responsibility for out-of-school activities should not be borne by the evacuated teachers alone. They need the unstinted co-operation of all manner of willing souls; but the primary responsibility is on the Christian citizen.

A PRACTICAL SUGGESTION

The crying need – both for the repair of family life and the restoration of education – is of sympathetic, enthusiastic and efficient local committees composed of people with imagination enough to understand that the enlightened care for the children is a spiritual "priority" amid the demands

of war. (We know of a country vicar's wife who has broken up her household, evacuated her own tiny children, and left her husband to fend for himself in order to parade about in a uniform all day; such a disordered sense of responsibility may serve as an extreme example of the *kind* of attitude which the Christian imagination must combat.) It would be impertinent to suggest detailed tasks for these committees: but one easily forgotten is that of providing the exiled teachers with friendly society and support, and another, that of restraining the clergy from retreating on to the notion that the religious education of the children is all that is in jeopardy. The committees would act as a medium by which the evacuees may be incorporated into the life of the local community and become a stimulus to it: they would be new organs of the Christian social conscience.

These practical organs of the Christian social conscience would have two primary tasks, corresponding to the two levels of action which we distinguished at the beginning. On the personal level there is a whole range of human relations which call for creative adjustment – between foster-parents and evacuees, between parents and foster-parents, between parents and their evacuated children, teachers and teachers. These adjustments, in the happiest cases, are spontaneously made by the individuals themselves; but neighbourhoods generally need to be inspired to do their best. The local committees should feel and foster a heightened sense of mutual responsibility and should encourage grievances on both sides to ventilate themselves in an atmosphere of goodwill, instead of festering. On the impersonal level, their function would be to spread an understanding of the material conditions out of which the more painful discrepancies inevitably arise and to create an informed and steady will to have those conditions remedied.

NOTES

1. Evacuation of women and children in London and other major English cities began on 1 Sept 1939, two days before England declared war on Germany. On 18 Sept, TSE began weekly Monday meetings on an advisory committee for the *Christian News-Letter*, a weekly founded by J. H. Oldham. The committee met to determine the topics on war and Christianity for the opening numbers. The introductory issue ("No. 0") appeared on 18 Oct, with a list of 48 collaborators, including TSE, on the front page. Each unpaginated issue contained a "Letter" from Oldham and a "Supplement" on a single topic, usually the work of a group of collaborators and advisers, but as TSE revealed to Brian Coffey on 21 Nov, "the large committee of [collaborators] . . . is not collectively active, the advisory work is done by a committee of five." "Evacuation – A Social Landmark," announced in the "No. 0" issue, appeared in the third,

introduced by Oldham as a paper "based on material received from many sources . . . and raises far-reaching issues of every kind." On 8 Nov, TSE wrote to John Hayward: "Monday the usual meeting, yesterday I wrote a memorandum on evacuation"; and again on 21 Nov: "I shall peg along at the Christian News-Letter, having done my bit by Evacuation. . . ." Though TSE was a significant contributor to the unsigned piece, a later index of the volume attributed the composition to John Middleton Murry. It is possibly a misattribution since Murry, who appears on the large list of collaborators but was not a member of the advisory committee, is not mentioned in the correspondence related to the article.

2. On 2 Nov, under the heading "Closed Schools / Scheme for Partial Reopening," the *Times* reported that on the previous day the parliamentary secretary to the Board of Education said: "His Majesty's Government have decided that such schools in evacuation areas as can be made available for educational purposes shall be reopened for the education of the children of parents who desire them to attend" (4).

3. The National Camps Corporation, directed by Sir Edward Howarth, rapidly created thirty-one camps in evacuation areas that housed 7,000 children aged eleven to fifteen in dormitories.

4. TSE wrote to Frank Morley on 30 Nov that he was going to spend the weekend with Bruce Richmond: "(I had a note from him advising me to travel First, as some of the 3d class carriages had not yet been disinfected after the evacuation!)." In the subsection "Slum Areas," TSE had discussed the effects of a multiyear slum clearance scheme on slum-dwelling families in his "Commentary" of Dec 1927 (3.294).

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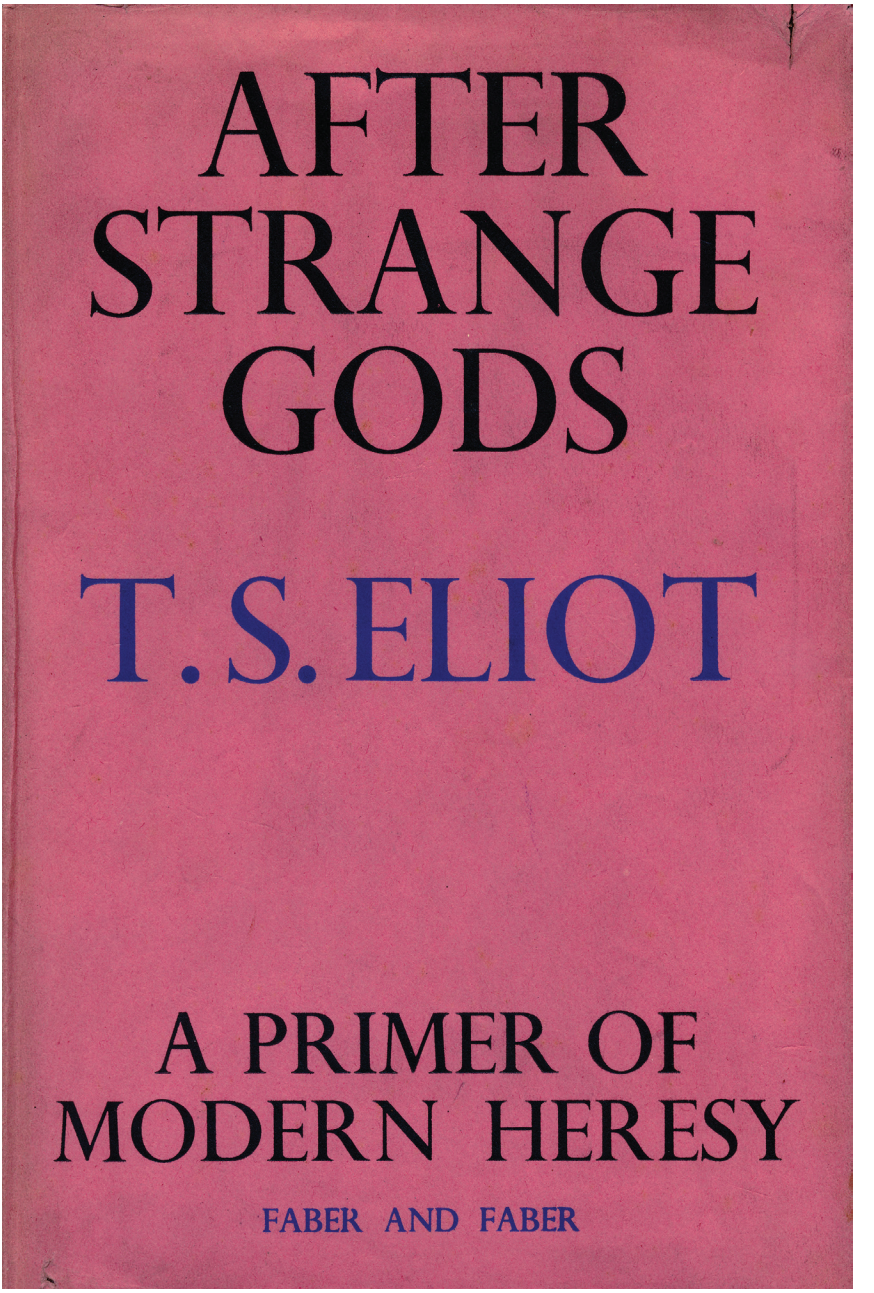

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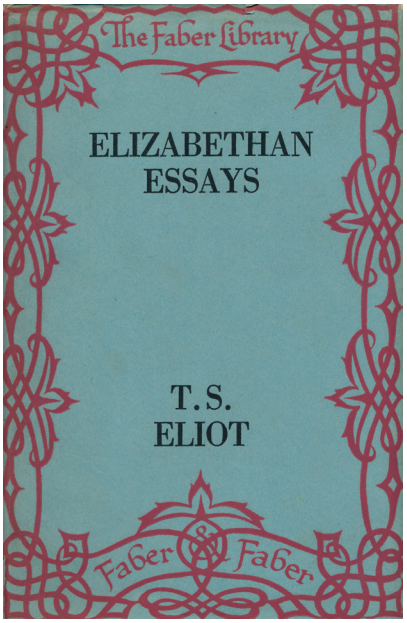

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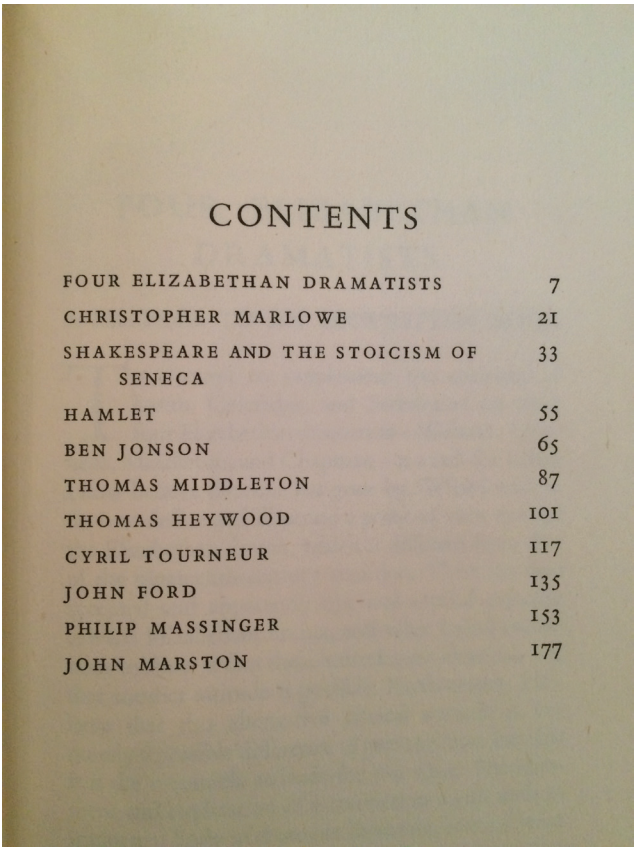

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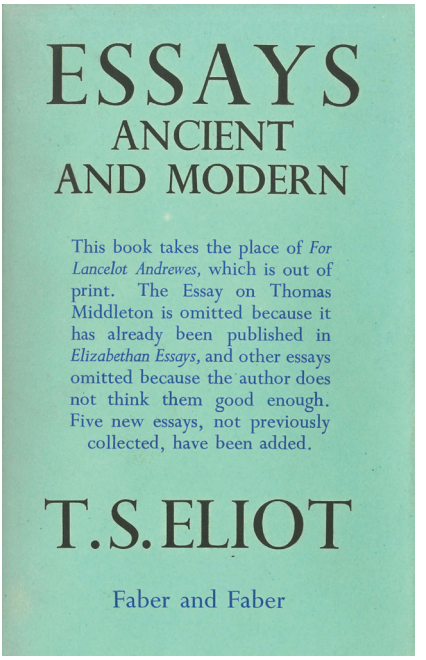
3. Contents of Elizabethan Essays, published on 4 Oct 1934. *All of the essays were included in* Selected Essays *(1932), except "John Marston," first published in the* TLS *in July 1934 and published in book form for the first time here and in the second English edition of* Selected Essays, *also in Oct 1934. It was not published in any American edition.*

4. Studio portrait of Eliot, photographed by Man Ray in July 1934, published with Eliot's lecture "Should There Be a Censorship of Books?" in the New Green Quarterly *(Autumn 1935).*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T.S.ELIOT
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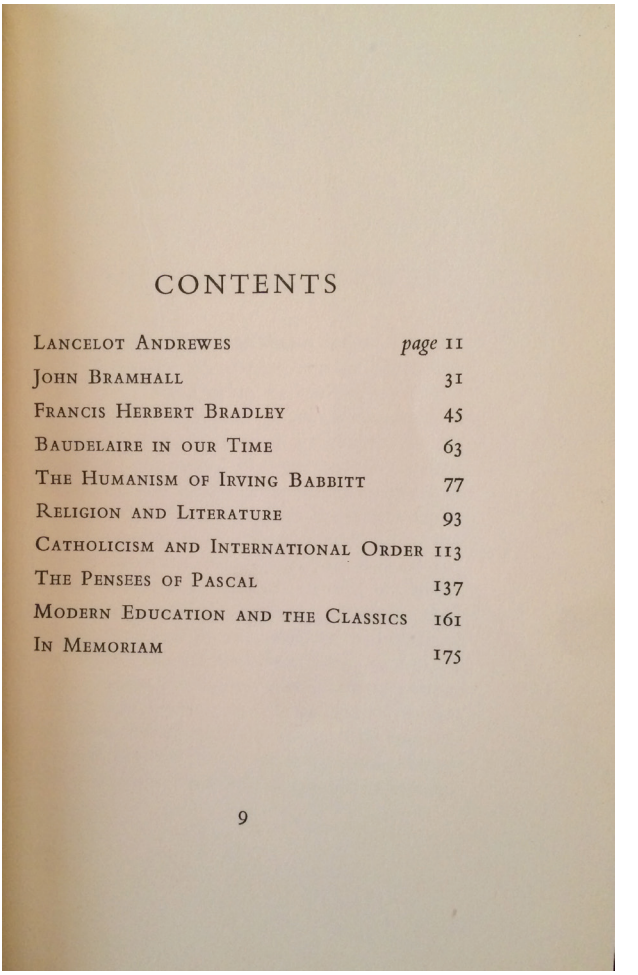
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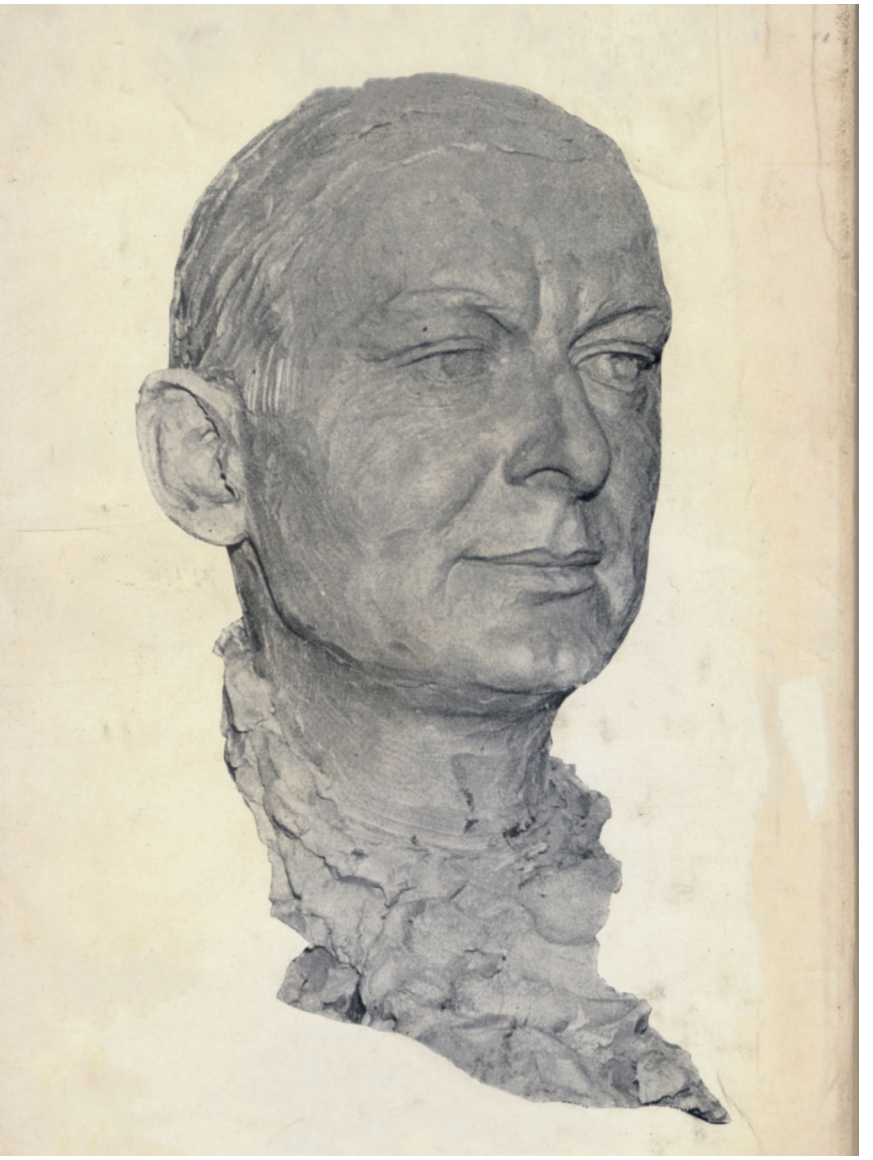

7. Bust of Eliot, by Donald Hastings, 1934; photographed and published with Eliot's lecture for the Save the Children Fund on 30 Jan 1936.

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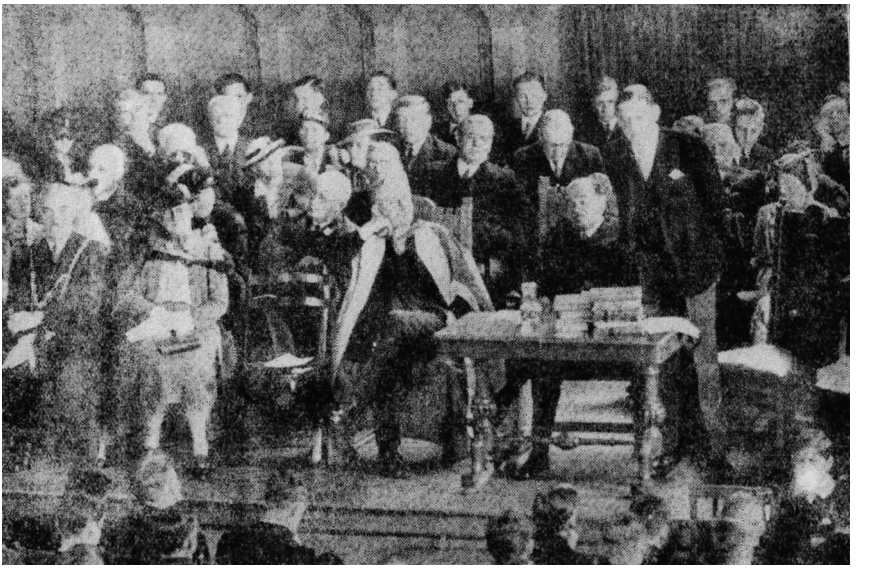

9. Eliot delivering the Speech Day address at the Truro School, a Methodist school for boys, Cornwall, on 3 June 1938; the lost photograph appeared in the school magazine, The Truronian, *in Dec 1938.*

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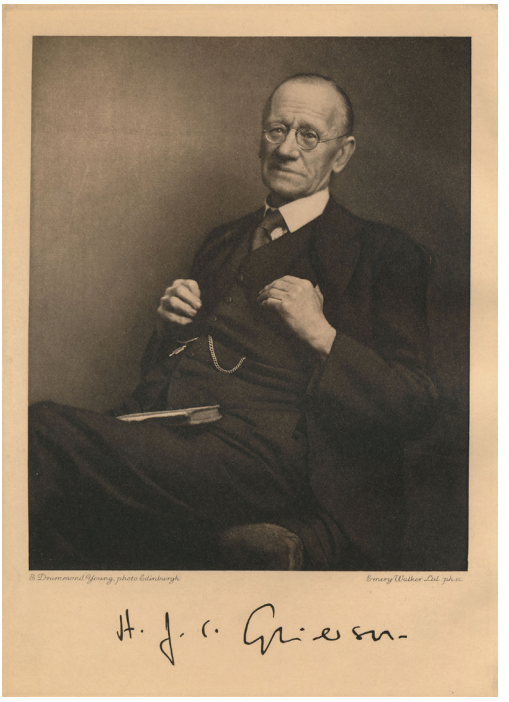

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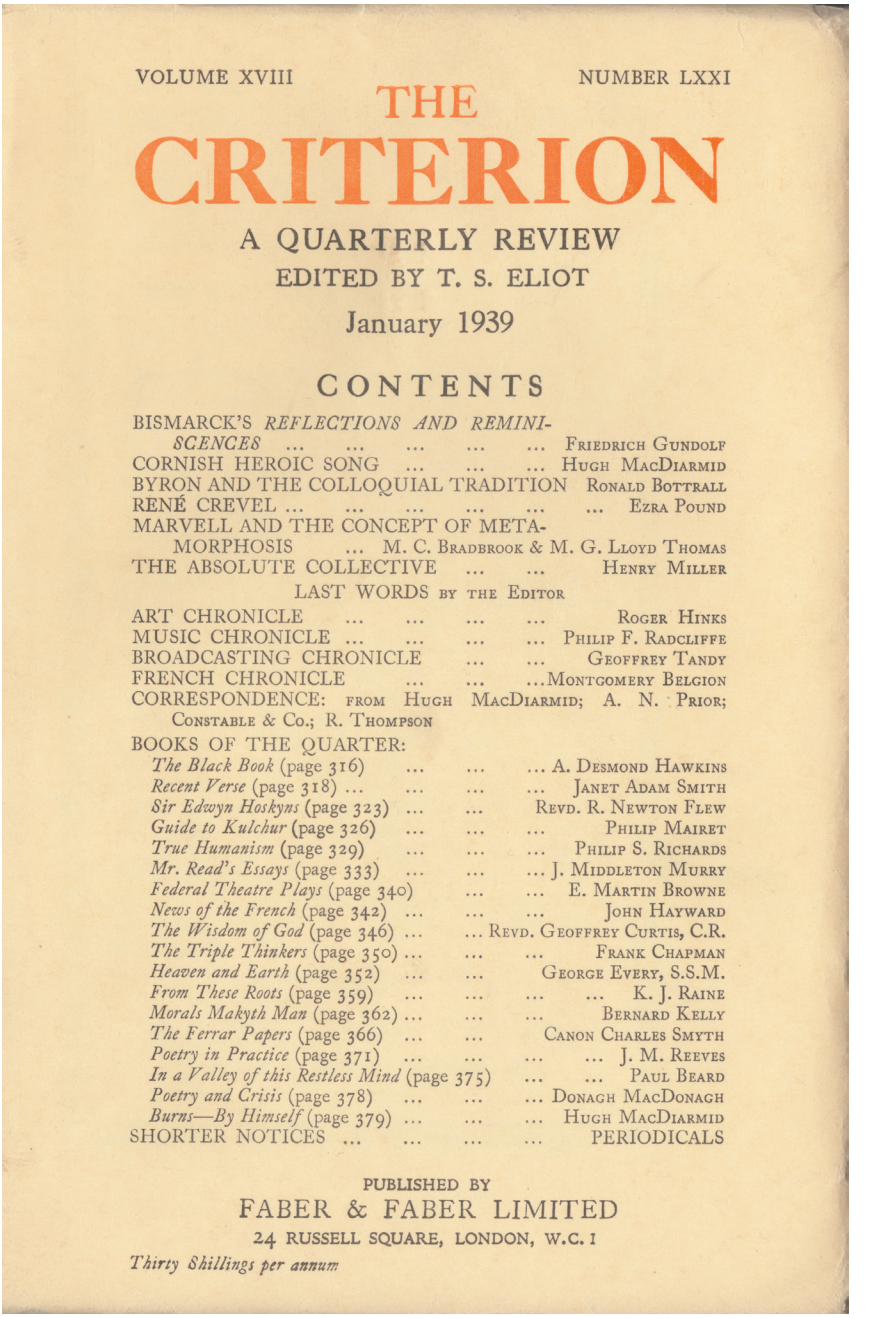

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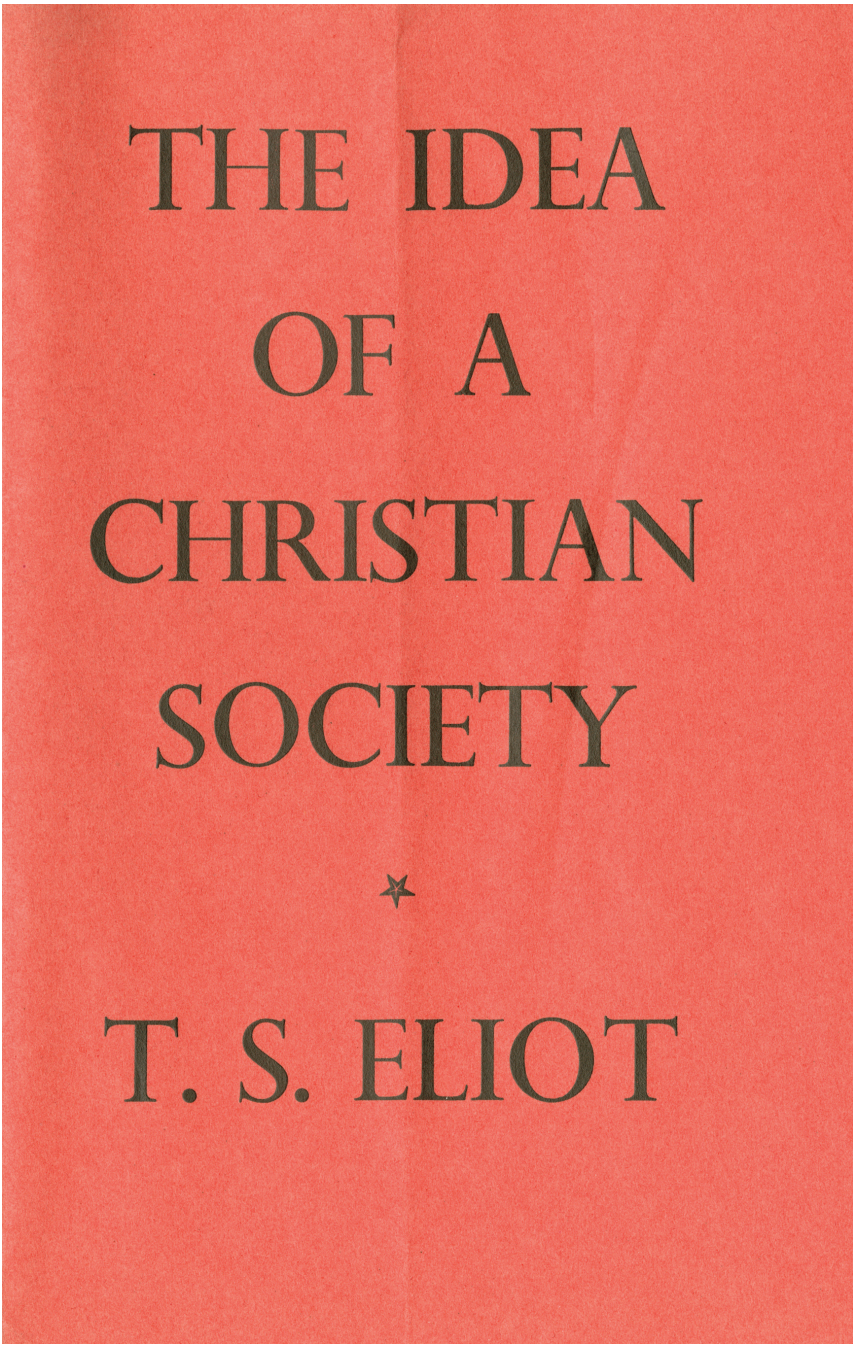

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